

## Education, the Economy, and Post-materialist Values in Russia: Evidence from the Chechnya Conflict

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### *Abstract*

*A large number of survey-based studies have led to a widely held opinion about value-shifts in the former Soviet Union. More specifically, scholars have argued for surprising evidence of "postmaterialist" values driven by either economic security or education, and that these values have salient implications for democratic progress throughout the region. The rise of "new Russians," e.g. urban, well-educated, and well-off supporters of democratic values has been posited since the early 1990s. This paper offers a cautionary alternative to this view, arguing that inconsistencies might exist on citizen attitudes on critical issues. Specifically we posit that some of the factors driving postmaterialist values might run counter to earlier widely held expectations, and find that Russian attitudes toward the conduct of the Chechnya conflict raise new questions about the strength of the postmaterialist argument in this part of the world.*

**Key Words:** *Postmaterialism, Chechnya, Russian Politics, Public Opinion, Education and Democratic Values, Economics and Democratic Values*

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## Introduction

Are Russian citizens' attitudes toward sensitive security issues congruent with the comparative politics literature's accumulated findings about the impact of wealth, education, urbanization and other factors on public opinion toward domestic policy? Considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to the post-communist evolution of both mass and elite attitudes in the former Soviet Union, resulting in a significant body of empirical research on both the determinants of political attitudes across various groups, and their possible implications for the continuing transition (Bahry, Kosolapov, Kozyreva, & Wilson, 2005; Zimmerman, 2002; Gibson, 2001, 1996a, 1996b; Bahry, 1999; Reisinger, Melville, Miller, & Hesli, 1996; Miller, Hesli, & Reisinger, 1997, 1995; Reisinger, Miller, Hesli, & Maher, 1994; Gibson & Duch, 1994). The long-overdue ability to apply survey techniques to the vast and diverse peoples of the former Soviet Union has been one of the most significant developments in social science in decades.

As productive as this collective scholarly enterprise has been, many questions remain unanswered, and many assumptions require re-examination. Concerning the former point, gauging public opinion toward foreign and/or security issues has lagged behind the exhaustive study of citizen attitudes toward market reforms and sweeping political changes. This also stands in stark contrast to the enormous body of work on mass and elite attitudes toward foreign policy in the American context (see Zimmerman 2002, 5-7). While tracking and making sense of opinion formation on market reforms and democratization is unquestionably valuable, a more complete picture of the nature of post-Soviet public opinion must also encompass the foreign/security policy dimension; it needn't be reiterated that this aspect of the transition is as critical as the political-economy component. This paper aims to contribute to this goal.

The burgeoning of post-Soviet attitude research has established an endless series of debates around questions such as: How "portable" are our assumptions about citizen's public opinion formation in advanced industrial democracies to the post-Soviet environment? To what extent do post-Soviet elites and masses converge or diverge in their political attitudes? Are our (admittedly young) assumptions about differences in attitudes across demographic groups in the former Soviet Union consistent as we move across different issue dimensions? Shifting focus to the main thrust of this paper, there are some very definite opinions about the nature and significance of "liberal" or "post-materialist" elites in the former Soviet Union (Gibson and Duch, 1994). Many assumptions derived from these analyses of citizens' opinion on domestic economic or political issues are used to make predictions about the state of democracy in the region and the extent of public support for political and economic reforms. However, to further this endeavor, it is necessary to expand the scope of research into areas such as attitudes towards security issues and the plight of various non-Russian minorities that are just as necessary to understand before making bold statements about democratic prospects in this part of the world.

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We take as our point of departure much of the earlier survey-based research looking at key differences across demographic groups in the post-Soviet context, the transitional “winners” vs. “losers,” or “successful” vs. “unsuccessful,” or “skilled” vs. “unskilled.” Furthermore, we specifically focus on whether attitudes amongst these groups conform to the expectations of the existing literature on postmaterialism and ask whether findings in Russia and other countries about the impact of factors such as wealth, education and urbanization on the likelihood of expressing postmaterialist values towards domestic economic and political issues also apply under circumstances in which a specific security threat poses a tangible danger to society. As a first step in this process, we examine public opinion via a survey on one of the most unequivocally sensitive security issues, the brutal conflict in Chechnya.<sup>5</sup> By looking at differences across various key groups in Russian society, we hope to at least shed a more critical light on the extent to which many of the prior assumptions about the effects of the transition on the cultivation of postmaterialist values hold when applied to less conventional but nonetheless critical issue dimensions.

### Divergent Groups in Post-Soviet Public Opinion

The initial forays of survey researchers into the former Soviet Union demonstrated conclusively that citizens were incredibly diverse in their opinions toward the most pressing political and economic issues. Making sense of this diversity was a far more ambitious task than demonstrating it, however. Early findings that many in the former Soviet Union were more supportive of market reforms and such democratic norms as “tolerance” and “pluralism” led to the question *why*. One possible answer was located in the body of literature that developed in response to Ronald Inglehart’s seminal work from the early 1970s on value shifts and “post-materialism.” Inglehart reasoned that as the economic needs of citizens were fulfilled, they would in turn focus their attention on satisfying a “higher order” of needs (1997; 1971). Further, he posited that “postmaterialist” value orientations are critical for the evolution of democratic politics; simply put, postmaterialists’ emphasis on personal autonomy and self expression led them to be more supportive of the core democratic values than “materialists” who are preoccupied with basic economic and security issues (1990). While much of the scholarly focus in this regard was on domestic issues, it was also suggested that postmaterialists would be more “doveish” on military and security policy than their materialist counterparts (Inglehart, 1990, 290).

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5 Survey data was acquired from the Public Opinion Foundation’s (*Fond Obshchestvennoe Mnenie* or FOM) weekly survey which monitors public opinion regarding different political actors and parties and also focuses on key “topics of the week.” The survey in question was conducted during the week of March 17, 2005 in the immediate aftermath of the death of Chechen opposition leader and former President of the Chechen Republic, Aslan Maskhadov. Each weekly survey draws from a nation-wide representative sample (excluding the Chechen Republic) of 1,500 adult respondents selected using multi-stage, stratified sampling techniques. Additional information about the survey’s content and methodology may be found on the FOM website at: <http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/penta>. Special thanks to Vladimir Zvonovskii for his help in acquiring the survey dataset.

In light of Inglehart's emphasis on the salience of economic security, it was all the more remarkable when evidence for postmaterialism was alleged in the former Soviet Union, hardly a paragon of economic achievement throughout the first post-Soviet decade. Inglehart and others applied the basic four items used in the construct that measures postmaterialism to the Russian citizenry:

1. Give people more say in the decisions of government (postmaterialist item);
2. Protect freedom of speech (postmaterialist item);
3. Maintain order in the nation (materialist item);
4. Fight rising prices (materialist item).

As will be discussed presently, the third item is especially salient for our analysis. Evidence of postmaterialist values were found, and attributed to the post-war Soviet regimes providing at least some measure of *security* during the last three decades of the Soviet state's existence (Inglehart, & Siemienska, 1990). Further analysis revealed the importance of certain demographic characteristics such as age, education, and income in contributing to post-materialist values (Gibson & Duch 1994, 23; Duch & Taylor 1993, 759-762).

Looking beyond the literature's focus on economic security, education was argued to be especially important in the post-Soviet case; indeed one area where Soviet policy was perhaps an unqualified success was in the broad expansion of education opportunities to its citizens. Scholars have long argued that education is critically related to support for democratic values (Duch & Taylor 1993; Gibson, Duch, & Tedin 1992; Weil, 1985; Flanagan, 1982; Dahl, 1971). Education can enhance values such as equality, tolerance, and respect for rights and liberties as well as serve as a conduit for socialization into democratic values. Duch goes so far as to posit that as levels of education increase in the former Soviet Union, levels of support for democratic values will show a concomitant rise as well (1993, 756).

Survey research building on these early studies has painted a collective picture of urban, prosperous, better-educated, and largely younger Russians, and posited that these groups would be the vanguard of democratic supporters. Does this necessarily translate into belief systems consistent with counterparts in advanced industrial democracies, or consistency across all sets of issues? Other survey analyses of Russian citizens have revealed a more complex picture than one of simple "postmaterialists" vs. "materialists," or "democrats" vs. "authoritarians." For example, research by Reisinger, Miller, Hesli, and Maher on Russian, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian citizens found that while those most supportive of democratic values were by and large urban and better educated, they also found that those who desire "strong leadership" tended to have more democratic values, not more authoritarian ones (1994, 203).

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Focusing on the differences between post-Soviet elites and ordinary citizens, further analyses also found that elites were on the whole simultaneously more reform-oriented than the masses, and more desirous of "law and order" over individual freedoms than masses (Miller, Hesli, & Reisinger 1997, 170; Reisinger, Melville, Miller, & Hesli 1996, 86-87). Zimmerman's exhaustive study of the foreign policy beliefs of elites and masses reveals stark differences in issue awareness, involvement and positions; by and large, elites during the 1990s were far less disposed to the use of force within the former Soviet Union than masses (2002, 95). It is possible of course that elites themselves have changed dramatically from Yeltsin's rule to Putin's, becoming more dependent on his policies for their success, and more aggressive about maintaining law and order (Jack, 2006, 313-320). In fact, recent anecdotal evidence points to the increase in the number of former security officers among the Russian political elites (Voswinkel, 2003).

Where the seemingly endless conflict in the Chechnya region fits into this puzzle is the focus of our analysis. Certainly few would argue that the conflict which erupted in 1994 is far from the minds of the Russian public; catastrophic apartment bombings, a dramatic and disastrous theatre siege in Moscow, subway bombings, downed twin jetliners, a horrific assault on a grade school in one of Russia's southern provinces, and the ever-mounting death toll of Chechen civilians and Russian troops are but some of the better known consequences of this conflict. Returning to the above-mentioned work of Inglehart and Siemieniska (1990), the First and Second Chechen Wars force us to reexamine the extent to which Russians feel physically secure within their borders. For the first time in 50 years, these conflicts, and their often bloody corollary effects, have reintroduced a tangible threat to Russians' everyday existence. What impact might the removal of these essential criteria for the cultivation of postmaterialist values have on Russian public opinion and value orientations?

It is clear that the conflict in Chechnya is more than merely a localized matter. Vladimir Putin has linked his political rise since 1999 to the conflict's resolution, as well as located Chechnya firmly within the international context of the "war on terror." Debates about the expansion or contraction of political rights and liberties in Russia today take place with Chechnya front and center in peoples' minds.<sup>6</sup>

Certainly the dimensions of the conflict extend to many of the key indicators used to track Russian citizens' beliefs about democratic norms and values such as civil liberties, individual freedom, and law and order. Moreover, while indicators such as those used to gauge postmaterialist values often tap into abstract notions and hypothetical situations,

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, a recent article in the *Economist* points to the remarkable impact that the wars in Chechnya has had on the development of post-Soviet Russia arguing that "Chechnya has shaped the angry and authoritarian country Russia has become." (The Warlord and the Spook)

Chechnya represents a tangible and threatening situation with direct and often painful consequences citizens can see, hear, and feel. Hence, in many respects our focus on respondents' attitudes toward the Chechen conflict provides a more critical test of the presence of post materialist values than research based upon abstract notions of liberty, human rights and other ideas.

How might we expect different groups of citizens to weigh in on the conflict? Drawing on the earliest post-materialist literature, a strict "postmaterialist vs. materialist" position might posit that Russian postmaterialists—the better off, better educated, younger cohorts concerned with the conflict's impact on democratic progress, would be far less likely to support a continued prosecution of the conflict at all costs, and would be more likely to endorse a peaceful solution. "Materialists" on the other hand, concerned with issues of law and order and territorial integrity might be more predisposed to prosecute the conflict by whatever means necessary. This view would be in accordance with older, established research on postmaterialism in advanced industrial democracies, where those meeting postmaterialist criteria are far more critical of increased defense spending and the use of force. One might surmise that the loudest voices for resolving the devastating Caucasus war quickly and peacefully would come precisely from that cohort deemed most supportive of democratic values: the urban, younger, better-educated, and better-off citizens. This view presupposes a certain stability of the long-term processes that contributed to this cohort's emergence.

On another topic, and by way of introducing an important control variable in our analysis, we note that studies of differences in the strength of postmaterialist values between men and women presents another important yet understudied aspect of the postmaterialism research agenda. Thus far, the literature provides little clear guidance as to whether one sex is more likely or less likely to hold postmaterialist attitudes. Two studies by Inglehart (1977, 1979) indicated that men were more postmaterialist than women. However, Oddbjørn Knutsen (1990) indicates that this relationship tends to vary from region to region by pointing out that Scandinavian women are slightly more postmaterialist than men. Moving closer to the subject of our research, a series of studies has indicated that women are less likely to be concerned with security and defense issues than men (Klein, 1984; Shapiro & Mahajan, 1986; Conover & Sapiro, 1993; Jelen, Thomas, & Wilcox, 1994). Looking more specifically at the Russian case, social organizations such as the Mothers of Beslan and the Union of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia suggest that women play a prominent role in efforts to end conflict in the Caucasus and that, for the most part, women are concerned about the impact that continued war and terrorism may have on their children and particularly their sons who are eligible for compulsory military service. Hence, we include a hypothesis in our analysis stating that women are more likely to take a pro-negotiation stance toward the Chechen war than men.

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### Social Requisites of Moderate Attitudes

In light of the literature described above, we test seven hypotheses focused on factors which we expect would influence an individual's likelihood of taking a hard-line "no negotiations" approach to the ongoing war in Chechnya. The hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: Rural residents are more likely to take a no-negotiations stance
- H2: Respondents with negative retrospective economic self assessments are more likely to take a no-negotiations stance
- H3: Males are more likely to adopt a no-negotiations stance
- H4: Older respondents are more likely to adopt a no-negotiations stance
- H5: Less educated respondents are more likely to adopt a no negotiations stance
- H6: Poorer respondents are more likely to adopt a no negotiations stance
- H7: Muscovites are more likely to adopt a no negotiations stance toward the war

To test these seven hypotheses, we estimated an ordinal logit model of the relationship between responses to the question, "Is it necessary or unnecessary for the Russian side to undertake negotiations with the opposing forces in Chechnya?" Responses to this question were recoded into a four category dependent variable ranging from the least hawkish "absolutely should negotiate" response (1) to the most hawkish "absolutely should *not* negotiate" response (4). For our independent variables we utilized measures of urbanization, retrospective economic self-assessments, gender, age, education and adjusted reported income. The gender variable takes on a 1 if the respondent is female and a zero if male. Our age measure represents a six category aggregated age measure. For the education variable, respondents are coded on a five point scale starting with beginning or lower education and ending with a complete or incomplete post-graduate degree.

The two socio-economic measures include a retrospective self-assessment of the respondent's success in adjusting to the new post-Soviet way of life in the Russian Federation and a self reported income measure. Respondents were asked; "Have you succeeded or failed to find your place in today's life?" Each respondent was presented with four options ranging from "completely succeeded in finding my place" to "completely failed to find my place." The self-reported income measure allows us to focus more specifically on the income level of our respondents. In the original survey, income is reported as a raw monthly income in rubles. However, to avoid the mistakes of other survey-based analyses in Russia which fail to account for variation in prices across the country's vast expanse, we adjusted the reported self income by the cost of living in the respondent's region by dividing the reported income by the regional cost of living (*prozhitochnyi minimum*) to produce a percentage indicating how much the respondent's income exceeds – or falls short of – the regional cost of living. This adjusted income measure was included in the model alongside the other above listed independent variables.

**Table 1 Weighted Robust Ordinal Logit Model Results: Against Negotiations**

No negotiation	Odds Ratios	Odds Ratios
Urban	0.74*	--
Retrospective Assessment	1.36***	1.34***
Female	0.39***	0.39***
Age	1.00	1.00
Education	1.19**	1.17*
Adjusted Income (Categorized)	1.15**	1.13**
Moscow dummy	--	0.61 <sup>a</sup>
$\chi^2$	83.41***	79.37***
N	1155	1155
a : p=0.18		

Turning first to the general model parameters the results of the log likelihood  $\Delta 2$  is significant beyond the .001 level giving us considerable confidence in the model as a whole. Aside from estimating the model using robust standard errors, we also took a number of additional steps to diagnose and test the robustness of our model. First we re-estimated the ordinal logit model as a probit model and found similar results in terms of the magnitude, significance and direction of the different relationships. To guard against violations of the ordinal logit's parallel regression assumption, we conducted a Brant test and found that the assumption held in all cases except the gender case. We subsequently reestimated the model as a multinomial logit and once again achieved similar outcomes in terms of the size, significance and general magnitude of our individual coefficients. Results of these tests are detailed in Appendix B.

Turning next to the individual coefficients, as indicated in the table, the results for the urban, gender and retrospect assessment measures support the standard post-material values arguments as presented in the discussion above. Holding all other factors constant, urban respondents are roughly 26% less likely to take a hard-line stance towards the war than their rural counterparts. Women are indeed more tolerant of the Chechen opposition with a highly significant coefficient indicating that they are little over 60% less likely to take a hard-line stance towards the war than men. The retrospective self-assessment indicated that as respondents moved towards less positive assessments of their adjustment to contemporary Russian life their likelihood of supporting a hard-line stance towards the Chechen opposition increased by 36%.

The results of the model also revealed some surprising outcomes. First, while older respondents were more likely to take a hard-line stance on the war, this relationship fell far short of standard levels of significance. Even more surprising, the results of the adjusted income measure indicate that wealthier respondents were more likely to take a hard-line stance towards the opposition in Chechnya. An increase from one adjusted income category to another amplified the likelihood of taking a no-negotiations stance by 15%. The relationship is highly significant at the .01 level. Finally, results for the education variable also seem to contradict the traditional post-material values thesis. In another highly significant relationship, as respondents' levels of education increase, they are more likely by a factor of almost 20% to take a hard-line stance on the war.



Fig. 1 Absolutely Should Not Negotiate: Predicted Probabilities

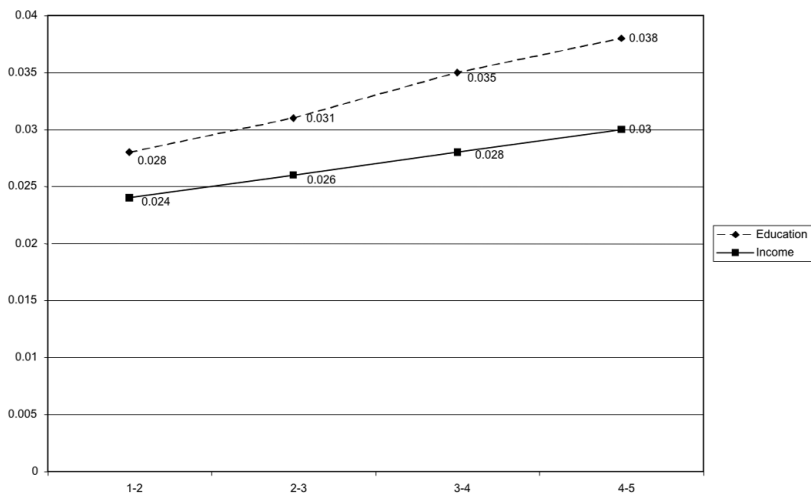
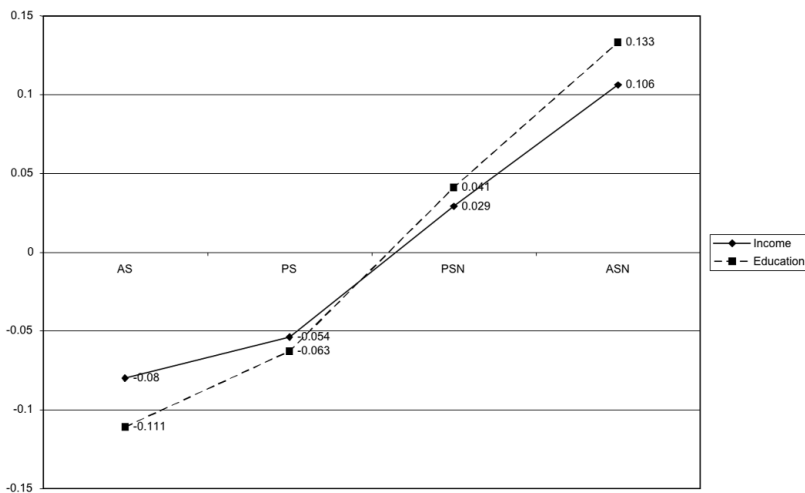


Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of the change in the predicted probability of taking a strict “no negotiations” approach to the war in Chechnya as one moves across the five categories of both the education (elementary through post-graduate) and adjusted income variables. As indicated in the figure, there is a steady increase in the likelihood of taking a hard-line stance on the war as one moves from the lowest to highest adjusted income categories and as one moves from the lowest to highest education categories.<sup>7</sup>

Fig. 2: Predicted Probability of Specific Responses: Poorest-Wealthiest, Least-Most Educated



<sup>7</sup> Predicted probabilities estimated using CLARIFY.

Figure 2 presents another graphical representation of our results indicating the differences in the probability of certain responses to the negotiation question (AS=absolutely should, PS=probably should, ASN=absolutely should not, etc.) between the lowest and highest income respondents and the least and most educated respondents. In other words, if we examine the curve representing the education variable, respondents with the highest level of education are less likely by a factor of 0.111 to adopt an “absolutely should negotiate” stance on the war than the least educated respondents. The same highly educated respondents are more likely to take an “absolutely should not negotiate” stance by a factor of 0.106 than their least educated counterparts. A similar interpretive logic is represented by the income curve.

### **Preliminary Explanation of the Results**

The results of our analyses suggest a relationship between various postmaterialist social characteristics and hardline attitudes towards the Chechen conflict which are seemingly at odds with the existing literature on postmaterialist values in the post-Soviet context. How might we account for these peculiar effects?

#### *Wealthy Russians as Materialists*

At first sight, apart from Military Industrial Complex functionaries and those involved in rebuilding of Chechnya, one sees few reasons to anticipate that more affluent Russians would support the continuation of the War in Chechnya. Aside from the drain on budgetary resources of the war and its related acts of violence and terror, the war might also be expected to negatively impact the Russian business environment due to instability and security concerns.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless the rather substantial literature on economic voting suggests that citizens may attribute much of their current wellbeing to incumbent governments and will consequently support incumbent's policies and reelection bids. In numerous analyses of voting behavior in US presidential and congressional elections linkages have been demonstrated between support for incumbents and individuals' perceptions either of their own “pocketbook” or of the state of the national economy as a whole (Erikson, 1989; Kramer, 1971; Tufte, 1975, 812–826; Tufte, 1978; Fair, 1978, 159–173; Hibbing & Alford, 1981, 423–439; Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981, 129–161; Feldman, 1982, 446–466; Weatherford, 1983, 917–938). Subsequent studies also suggest that institutional context plays an important mediating role between economy and government approval. Specifically, when certain institutional factors, such as majoritarian governments and/or presidential systems, make it clear who the actual decision-maker is, when the target that

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<sup>1</sup> Having said this, the authors are also aware of a piece of conventional wisdom which argues that certain wealthier Russians, particularly those with ties to the criminal underworld, stand to profit from the war and resulting legal vacuum in the region. However, this is a relatively small number of individuals who most likely play little role in our sample.

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takes credit or guilt is large and there are few viable alternatives, the economic link is stronger (Anderson, 2000). When applied to the Russian case this last observation suggests that, given a super-presidential system where most power is at least perceived as being concentrated in the presidency, wealthier Russians are most likely to associate an improvement in their lifestyle over the past 7 years with the governance of president Putin. As evidence of this, 2005 FOM survey data provides some indication of a linkage between wealth and regime support. According to the survey, 82.6% of people with a per capita income of 1,500 rubles and below find Putin's presidential performance excellent, good or satisfactory. For Russians, whose income is in a range of 1,501-2,999 rubles, this increases slightly to 83.3%. Among Russians earning 3,000 rubles and above Putin's presidential approval is as high as 86.7%. Given Putin's generally high approval ratings, these results do not offer a vast degree of variation across the different groups, but they do suggest some strengthening of support as wealth increases.

From there, one can then ascribe the wealthier respondents' greater hawkishness to two factors. First, while much of Russia's post 1999 economic growth is directly attributable to the energy sector and, at least initially, the post-1998 ruble "bounce," there is also a sense that the administration's focus on "law and order" has created a more stable environment for business activities. Furthermore, the administration's "*diktat zakona*" (dictatorship of the law) and federal *power vertikal* are intimately tied to efforts to not only create stability and order throughout the federation, but to also focus on the sources of banditry and secessionism in the Caucasus and elsewhere. Therefore, if a respondent attributes their economic wellbeing to the *diktat zakona* and its perceived beneficial effects on everyday economic and social transactions, then they are more likely to also support the *diktat* as it has been manifested in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chechen War. These are part and parcel of the same administrative priorities.

On a second, and related note, there is also the possibility that support for Putin *means* support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chechen War. With a nod to Tilly, one might say that "Putin made the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chechen War and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chechen War "made" Putin." Under these circumstances, socioeconomic winners, many of whom made their wealth during Russia's period of economic growth from 1999-present, are likely to support most policies pursued by the president who ruled over this period's economic revival. This interaction with the authorities holds true for both high profile businessmen and more ordinary Russians. According to Russia's *Finance* magazine's chief editor, Oleg Anisimov, most businessmen that go into politics align with the president (Osborn, 2005). Anisimov claims, "If you have a senior position and you help someone in the business world it is widely understood that you are owed a favor and that you will be repaid." (Osborn, 2005).

Of course, the above conclusions beg the question as to why wealthier citizens in developed democracies characterized by clear lines of administrative responsibility do not demonstrate the same tendency to unconditionally support regimes which ruled during times of economic prosperity. Indeed if this were an overwhelming tendency, then the

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post-materialist “revolution” may not have occurred at all. A preliminary answer to this question may be found in the specific conditions characteristic of existing post-communist regimes – more specifically, the fact that many countries in Central and Eastern Europe are only now emerging from the depths of sharp economic downturns which accompanied attempts to reform their preexisting economies. With material concerns topping surveys throughout the region during the 1990s and with the travails of economic hardship still so fresh in their minds, one might continue to expect that a government's performance – perceived or otherwise – as an economic manager still provides the most salient criteria for a respondent's support. Those who recently “made it” economically might also be expected lavish their gratitude on a regime which so recently pulled them from the socioeconomic depths. Over time, however, a basic level of socioeconomic wellbeing becomes taken for granted, and under these circumstances, the better off may tend to apply more stringent, varied and even “postmaterialist” criteria to the regime. At its current stage of economic development, the Russian administration is not likely to face many of these “spoiled” wealthier voters in the near future.

#### *Educated Russians as Materialists*

Better educated Russians support the Russian President's Chechnya endeavor for some of the very same reasons as wealthy citizens. While the linkage is by no means perfect, and anecdotal evidence to the country is abundant, there is still some correlation (a Spearman's  $\rho$  of 0.12) between wealth and the level of education in Russia. Hence, we might expect a residual economic voting effect to impact the performance of this variable as well.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that education also changes both the level and nature of perceptions regarding the conflict. For instance, in an attempt to explain mass public opinion toward the Vietnam War, Zaller (1991) proposes a model uniting directional thrust of information in mass media, public attentiveness toward that information, and people's political values. Implicitly assuming that education is associated with more “dovish” attitudes toward the Vietnam War, Zaller (1991) nevertheless finds that better-educated exhibit greater support for the War (1234). Drawing on Mueller (1973) he explains away this anomaly arguing that “better-educated persons, though not dispositionally hawkish, are more susceptible to elite opinion leadership, since they are more heavily exposed to what elites are saying.” (1234). This, according to Zaller, did not change at least until early 1990s as education seems to be positively related with the mainstream policy towards the war.

Further, Lurch and Sperlich (1979) using earlier data show that the support for the Vietnam War has been the highest among the respondents holding college-level degrees from smaller and less prestigious institution as opposed to non-college population or the graduates of the “quality” schools, such as Harvard, Chicago, and Berkley. In Lurch and Sperlich's view, such “citizens remained more hawkish (and supportive) because, unlike

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the lowest status members of society, they did not have a negativism towards government born of a long history of poor treatment and privations" (40-41). Moreover, "their patriotism associated opposition to the war with disloyalty and other characteristics perceived as undesirable," which distinguished them from Harvard or Berkley alumni (41).

Extraordinary threats such as the Chechen war and its violent derivative effects in other parts of the Russian Federation have been a topic of debate within the political tolerance literature. Although a number of contributors to this body of scholarly work argue that more educated individuals tend to be more tolerant, others counter such claims and findings (Bobo and Licari 1989). In an attempt to reconcile the two sets of arguments, Bobo and Licari (1989) conducted an analysis based on the 1984 General Social Survey to test the effects of education on multiple measures of tolerance. Specifically, they identify the conditions under which the effects of education on political tolerance would manifest themselves. They, in particular, claim that cognitive sophistication, which refers to openness to new ideas, high intellectual interests and the desire to risk uncertainty and ambiguity largely mediates the link between education and tolerance. Bobo and Licari (1989) further argue that the better educated would still be more politically tolerant even of the groups they dislike. More importantly, the authors maintain that a strong education – tolerance link is only valid when tolerated groups are non-threatening nonconformist groups.

Accordingly, the relationship between education and tolerance breaks down under the extraordinary conditions of immediate threat and violence. Models (Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1979), which employ violent collectivities as the target groups for tolerance, find only weak and indirect effect of education on tolerance. In the Sullivan model, such groups include the Ku Klux Klan, the Symbionese Liberation Army, and the Black Panthers, all of which "have histories of violence and criminal activity" (Bobo & Licari 1989, 304). These findings thus imply that the positive influence of education on tolerance fades away when the tolerated groups in question present an extreme threat and are associated with crime and violence (304).

This argument can be taken further to suggest that in the conditions of an extreme threat from a group perceived to be primarily involved in criminal activities (as opposed to, say an oppressed group fighting for independence or greater autonomy) an individual's tolerance of the disliked group decreases as his/her level of education increases. The educated are less likely to negotiate with a "criminal" movement that resorts to violence and terror because they tend to see that force as more "savage" and "uncivilized" than themselves. If it was a matter of the government inflicting violence on a peaceful, oppressed, opposition, the educated might sympathize with the opposition's "civilized" resort to non-violent resistance that adheres to rational argumentation. Even those western academics who recognize collective rights for ethnic minority groups and advocate a

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model of a multicultural mosaic society make an exception for intolerant groups as unworthy of such recognition (Kymlicka, 2001). In light of persistent ethnic stereotypes of Chechens in the Russian media as “criminals,” “bandits,” and “terrorists,” (Freire, 2005, 14) the educated Russians may find themselves supporting any effort to “wipe out the savages” because as they perceive negotiations as a less than feasible option.

Finally, another piece of the “education puzzle” may be found in the crudest form of rational self-interest. Simply put, better educated Russians pay lower costs for containing the perceived danger militarily. According to the current Law on Military Obligation and Military Service (1998), citizens may enjoy *otsrochkas* (army service delay) during their college education and graduate studies. Moreover, doctoral candidates (PhDs) and doctors of sciences (advanced PhDs) are exempt by law from military conscription. Hence, the better educated, whether consciously or unconsciously, may include such factors as lower personal costs in their considerations as to whether to adopt a hawkish stance towards the war. While such extreme self-interest may not account for the attitudes of a majority of our respondents, this remains a plausible explanation which may in part help account for our divergent findings.

## Conclusion

The results of this study support our expectation that the various factors driving the attitudes of different social groups in post-communist Russia do not necessarily work in the manner and consistently as is often reported. While it was not the intention of these authors to discredit the earlier findings on post-materialist values in Russia and their implications for democracy, our initial findings do raise some questions about what one might infer from those findings. To the extent that the brutal ethnic conflict in the Caucasus overlaps with domestic policy issues such as law and order and civil right and liberties, it may be that caution is warranted in assuming that “new Russians” behave precisely in particular ways. While time and data availability will undoubtedly shed more light on this puzzle, our most troubling finding is that well-educated and economically successful Russians, the “core believers” of democratic values, favor the most draconian options in dealing with Chechnya. What are we to infer from this?

First, we reiterate that these tentative findings do NOT overturn completely what conventional wisdom argues about value change in Russia; some of our findings—the effect of urbanization and gender, for example, are in lockstep with previous scholarly opinion. While the Chechen conflict certainly overlaps with issues that traverse the post-materialist/materialist divide—law and security, civil rights and liberties—the issue is in and of itself an unprecedented and idiosyncratic one. The various linkages between this conflict

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and many other issue dimensions remain to be explored, and are beyond the present capacity of this paper for the time being.

On the other hand, our findings indicate that Russian “postmaterialists” are not quite as easy to typecast as prior research has argued or implied. It needn’t be highlighted that the initial assumptions on postmaterialism and the conditions that give rise to it were derived from relatively stable, prosperous, and unquestionably democratic advanced industrial societies. Most of the former Soviet Union has been at least partly unsuccessful on all three of those dimensions. Russia faces an unprecedented economic and political transition that has been markedly less successful than in post-communist East Europe, with a concomitant series of brutal and now far-reaching ethnic conflicts. While it is far too simplistic to argue back to the dated “Russia is unique” line of reasoning, it is also the case that Russia is experiencing domestic and security upheavals that few Western democracies have had to endure in the post-war era. It seems reasonable to expect that such changes will have an impact on how post-Soviet social divisions view critical issues.

**Appendix A: Responses to Questions Related to the Conflict in Chechnya**

Should Russia negotiate?	<i>Absolutely</i>	<i>Probably</i>	<i>Probably Not</i>	<i>Absolutely Not</i>	<i>Hard to Say</i>	
	16%	29%	15%	24%	17%	
Has the situation improved recently?	<i>Much Better</i>	<i>Somewhat Better</i>	<i>Remains the Same</i>	<i>Somewhat Worse</i>	<i>Much Worse</i>	<i>Hard to Say</i>
	4%	25%	50%	5%	2%	14%
Will the situation normalize soon?	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Probably</i>	<i>Probably Not</i>	<i>Definitely Not</i>	<i>Hard to Say</i>	
	3%	26%	34%	16%	21%	
Are Russian authorities doing all that is necessary to normalize the situation?	<i>Wants to but cannot</i>	<i>Wants to and can</i>	<i>Can but doesn't want to</i>	<i>Can't and doesn't want to</i>	<i>Hard to Say</i>	
	13%	31%	32%	10%	14%	

**Appendix B: Robustness  
Comparison of Logit and Probit Results**

No Negotiations	Logit Coef. (RSE)	Probit Coef. (RSE)
Urban	-0.31* (0.13)	-0.19* (0.09)
Retrospective Economic	0.30*** (0.08)	0.17*** (0.05)
Female	-0.94*** (0.13)	-0.54*** (0.08)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	0.18** (0.07)	0.10* (0.04)
Adjusted Income	0.14** (0.05)	0.08** (0.03)
Wald $X^2$	83.41***	80.72***

**Brant test of Parallel Regression Assumption**

	$X^2$	$p > X^2$	df
All	25.83	0.011	12
Urban	4.05	0.132	2
Retrospective Economic	1.75	0.417	2
Female	15.99	0.000	2
Age	3.67	0.160	2
Education	1.70	0.427	2
Adjusted Income	0.59	0.745	2

**Multinomial Logit Results  
Baseline=Absolutely Should Negotiate**

	Prob. Should Coef. (RSE)	Prob. Should Not Coef. (RSE)	Abs. Should Not Coef. (RSE)	LR Test
Urban	-0.63*** (0.20)	-0.60** (0.23)	-0.60** (0.21)	7.42 <sup>a</sup>
Retrospective Economic	0.05 (0.11)	0.20 (0.13)	0.41*** (0.13)	19.48***
Gender	0.10 (0.20)	-0.37 (0.23)	-1.33*** (0.21)	89.07***
Age	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	4.37
Education	0.03 (0.10)	0.09 (0.12)	0.26* (0.11)	9.80*
Adjusted Income	0.08 (0.07)	0.18* (0.07)	0.22** (0.08)	13.90**
$X^2$	132.20***			
N	1155.00			
A: $p \leq 0.059$				



### Appendix C: Variables

**No negotiation (Min 1; Max 4; Mean 2.55; SD 1.06):** A four value measure of the respondent's attitude towards a negotiated settlement in Chechnya. Respondents are asked the question: "Is it necessary or unnecessary for the Russian side to undertake negotiations with the opposing forces in Chechnya?" Available responses were "absolutely necessary, probably necessary, probably unnecessary, absolutely unnecessary, and don't know." In our model, the variable has been recoded into a "no negotiation" measure by coding the "absolutely necessary response as "1" and the absolutely unnecessary response as "4."

**Retrospective Assessment (Min 1; Max 4; Mean 2.45; SD 0.90):** Respondent's self assessment of their ability to adjust to contemporary, post-Soviet life. Each respondent was asked, "Have you succeeded or failed to find your place in today's life?" Respondents were presented with four options ranging from "completely succeeded in finding my place" to "completely failed to find my place."

**Education (Min 1; Max 5; Mean 3.40; SD 1.04):** Measure of respondent's education. Values are coded as: "1" beginning and elementary; "2" incomplete high school; "3" general high school, PTU; "4" technical school; "5" higher education, post graduate.

**Adjusted Income: (Min 1; Max 5; Mean 3.00; SD 1.52)** Measure of the respondent's reported monthly income divided by the monthly cost of living for the respondent's region during the third or fourth quarter of 2005. The resulting percentages of regional cost of living are then aggregated into five categories indicating whether the respondent falls into the 20<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup>, or 100<sup>th</sup> percentile of individuals in the survey.

**Female:** Dummy variable equaling "1" if the respondent is female (55% of respondents), "0" if male.

**Urban:** Dummy variable equaling "1" if the respondent was interviewed in Moscow, St. Petersburg or a regional center, "0" otherwise.

**Moscow Dummy:** Dummy variable equaling "1" if the respondent was interviewed in Moscow, "0" otherwise.

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