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1.1 Introduction

Is there any subway in the world comparable to the Moscow Metro in architectural beauty and uniqueness? Where else in the world is the subway among the top tourist attractions? The sight-seeing tour of the Moscow Metro can last a whole day, and no wonder: high ceilings; mosaic-decorated walls; large corridors with arcs and marble columns; spacious, luxurious stairs connecting stations; cathedral-like chandeliers – all of this gives the impression of being inside a royal palace rather than a subway. Each station is a unique masterpiece of architecture. Spacious, gleamingly clean, elegant halls, filled with daylight, create the sensation of being simultaneously in the past (a reminder of the Tsarist palaces of the nineteenth century) and in a futuristic extraterrestrial station.

The Moscow Metro is a perfect example of the actual legacy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The Metro was founded in the 1930s under the reign of Joseph Stalin as the Secretary General of the CPSU, and developed along its initial luxurious path throughout the decades of the USSR. It was meant to become a cathedral of the Soviet Union and a reflection of the future victory of Communism in the world. And a cathedral it became. As the official head of construction work, Lazar Kaganovich (the People's Commissar of Transportation and one of the leaders of the Party), said about the construction workers of the Metro: "They did build the Metro; they were the first to dig underground; they were the first to show that *Bolsheviks can build great things*, not only on the ground, but also beneath it."ⁱ Thus, the Metro was to be a symbol of the achievements of the Soviet people and of the Communist Party. Even during the Iron Curtain era, high-level foreign guests were proudly

ⁱ <http://metro.lenta.ru/>. Accessed October 16, 2018 [emphasis added]. Throughout the book, all direct quotes from Russian sources are translated by the authors.

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invited to visit the Moscow Metro as one of the best museums in the capital.¹ The Moscow Metro is undoubtedly the most luxurious and beautiful of all existing subways in the world. However, is it the safest one? What is hidden behind such palatial elegance projecting images of wealth and well-being?

The Moscow Metro has always been (and still remains) a state-owned enterprise. It was also a symbol of the political power of the CPSU, as well as an image of state's power. Anything that happens inside the Moscow Metro directly affects the image of the state and can compromise its reputation and efficiency. For this reason, many myths surround the Metro. In the 1980s, the last decade of the USSR's existence, one of the most prominent accidents to occur inside the Russian Metro took place on February 18, 1982. It became known as "the massacre at Aviamotornaya Station." According to some sources, eight people died and fifteen were heavily injured; other sources state that dozens of people died and more than 100 were injured; further sources specify that almost 40 people died and approximately 150 were injured.² The reaction of various low-level branches of the Communist Party of the USSR was to express standard condolences to families – nothing is known about any official investigation, little was announced on the news, and no follow-up on the tragic events happened in the years after the accident. To this day, the true reason for this tragedy, and even the number who died, remains unknown. More importantly, citizens of Moscow are split into two camps: the majority of the population do not know about the accident at all, while a small number of others remember it well (either because they lived close by or because their families were involved in the tragedy).³ In 1982 the TV news was discreet about the event in order to maintain both the myth of the Moscow Metro being the best-functioning and fastest metro in the world, and, related to this, the image of the power of the CPSU. To date, it is not known who was responsible for the tragedy, what the reasons behind it were, or whether any security measures were taken to prevent it from happening again.

Thirty-two years later, in the middle of the bright sunny morning of July 15, 2014, the phone of one of the authors of this book was ringing

¹ In May 1982, the president of New York City Council, Carol Bellamy, was escorted through the Moscow Metro.

² www.e-reading.club/chapter.php/1022931/35/Nikolaev_-_TASS_upolnomochen_prom_olchat.html. Accessed September 20, 2018. The text quoted above specifies that the "mystery" of the accident was not solved and the true reasons for the accident are unknown to the public.

³ We have talked to many citizens of Moscow over the age of 50, yet very few could recall the major accident in the Moscow Metro in 1982 (the accident of 1982 was the largest in the existence of the Metro until the event of 2014).

nonstop with calls from friends all over Europe asking “Are you all right?!”⁴ We switched on the TV news, but nothing seemed especially disturbing; a nice lady announced routine news from all over the world, mentioning casually that “the accident in the Metro took place at 08.39 a.m.,” but with no follow-up. This was intended to let people know that part of the Metro would not be functioning for a while and passengers were advised to use above-ground transportation that day. On the same day, in the evening news, at 21.00 Moscow time, *Vremia* (“The Time”) mentioned that an accident had occurred in the Metro. Viewers were informed that an investigation had been initiated and, at present, there were two possible explanations: either the electricity had been cut-off, or there had been a terrorist attack (this explanation has regularly been used by the Russian authorities and the Russian public for major catastrophes occurring since the mid-1990s). National TV channels gave no further details of the “accident,” either that week or any other week, apart from one very small video report, released on TV, about a team rescuing people from the tunnels, showing the efforts of the capital to help. A few days later, mainly thanks to various internet sources, some people assembled snippets of information from the radio and newspapers, and it became clear that the outcome of the “accident” was the death of 24 people and the injury of 160 people. The accident, to this day, is the most deadly in the existence of the Moscow Metro.

What caused the catastrophe? What are the results of the investigations? There is a gap between official TV announcements and online news sources. According to official state news (published on the internet and in newspapers), the following day (July 16) the Investigative Committee of Russia “efficiently” arrested a senior track master and his assistant and accused them of negligence. Later, the track repair deputy director and deputy director of the subcontractor company were arrested, and all four were fined and sentenced to 5–6 years of imprisonment. The official investigation blamed workers and mid-level officials. However, Russian internet sites and some newspapers reported very different reasons for the tragedy, such as the constant mismanagement of the entire Moscow Metro, poor technical maintenance of the Metro, and, above all, cost-cutting practices by the Metro’s owner – i.e., the state.⁵ According to the

⁴ Having much experience of living in Russia, we know that we are always the last to learn news about Russia from Russia. News about Russia is first transmitted by Western mass media to Europe and the USA. Only after this do the people of Russia hear news from their own homeland.

⁵ These explanations appeared in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*: www.mk.ru/zloba-dnya/2014/04/29/kuda-katitsya-stolichnoe-metro.html, accessed September 25, 2018. According to other sources, the tragedy could have been avoided: at least 2 weeks earlier, a concerned passenger had warned the Metro’s administration about increased vibration on the line on

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same sources, the workers are common scapegoats in any investigation, yet they are often more professional than bureaucrats and more efficient in rescuing people and hence in overcoming the obstacles created by officials. All these updates were released on the internet and in newspapers but were never discussed on the main TV channels.

Despite the 32 years between these two tragedies, what they have in common is shallow and indifferent TV news coverage. Low- and mid-level officials were prosecuted in 2014, leaving high-level officials as guardians of the Metro. One of the questions that was never raised in either case is what measures were put in place to prevent this from happening again. This is something we will never know.

As a result, the luxurious architecture remained, but the high-quality engineers disappeared without a trace.⁶ However, an associated legacy is the untouchable image of the owner of the Metro: the state (be that the USSR or modern Russia). The state cannot be held responsible, and TV respects this unwritten rule. The case of the Moscow Metro is a pronounced example of the legacies of the Communist Party in terms of both maintaining an impeccable image of state power and of the discreet treatment of and respectful attitude toward this image on the part of the national mass media; it is also an example of legacy in terms of the stunning architecture designed by the CPSU, and a masterpiece of high-level Soviet engineering.

The Moscow Metro thus encompasses various dimensions of the legacy uncovered and analyzed in this book: the image of the state in the eyes of the population; the relationship between the state and the people (and the lack of accountability to the people); the public opinion manipulated by mass media and TV channels (unconditional popularity of the regime); the superficial luxury at the cost of actual efficiency and safety (negligence and corruption); and the actual material legacy – i.e., the architecture and the declining quality of engineers.

1.2 The Shadow of the CPSU

Fundamentally, a legacy can be defined as a social or physical phenomenon that exists after the disappearance of the environment in which it

which the accident occurred. See TSN: <https://ru.tsn.ua/svit/rukovodstvo-metro-v-moskve-preduprezhdali-o-vozmozhnosti-tragedii-dve-nedeli-nazad-377105.html>, accessed September 25, 2018.

⁶ After the collapse of the USSR, the salaries of engineers decreased to an extent that made it impossible to survive on them. Most engineers simply changed profession and left to become managers at small and mid-range businesses, while others left to go abroad. The quality of university-level engineers radically decreased, and so did demand within the population to follow this career path.

was created. Obviously, social life is always generating “legacies” of some sort, as our actions are always constrained by the choices we made in the past. In political science scholarship, the main attention is on those legacies which survive despite (what may appear to be) grave historical discontinuities. This book is particularly interested in whether there are values, political institutions, or patterns of behavior that are inherently linked to a particular environment (e.g., regime or polity) and that still exist decades (or even centuries) after that regime or polity disappeared in a revolution, uprising, or war. Examples include political practices that emerged in response to certain formal and informal rules but that continue to function even after those rules have disappeared; political organizations (parties or bureaucracies) that outlive the regime that they were part of; and “phantom borders”⁷ – that is, borders of past political entities that no longer exist in the legal or administrative sense but that are clearly visible on electoral maps or maps of mass protests. There is abundant evidence that these social and political phenomena are much more robust than they appear to be (Simpser et al. 2018).

In the universe of these legacies, the specific group of Communist, or, following Jowitt (1992), Leninist legacies – that is, the persistent social and political phenomena that are observed in post-Communist countries in spite of the disappearance of the original political and social environment – enjoys particular attention. These legacies are extremely diverse and powerful and thus call for detailed investigation (Beissinger and Kotkin 2014). Communist regimes belonged to a group of particularly intrusive autocracies, with few (or no) spheres of society left unaffected by the interventions of the regime. They also belonged to regimes with very strong propaganda and indoctrination machines, and these regimes invested substantial effort in building a universal schooling system that, among other things, served the purpose of conveying official ideology to the population. Finally, they are a paradigmatic example of left-wing authoritarianism (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2019). This resulted in important behavioral changes that persisted for decades after the fall of Communism (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2011, 2013, 2014). The intrusiveness of the regimes, however, frequently generated opposite reactions, as people behaved in a way that reduced their “visibility” to the all-powerful state (Sztompka 1993). There are good reasons to expect Communist legacies to remain persistent for a long period of time, and research has indeed produced a wide array of findings confirming that Communist countries still differ from the non-Communist world and that generations socialized under Communist rule bear the mark of the

⁷ <http://phantomgrenzen.eu/das-projekt>, accessed October 16, 2018.

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political environment in which they grew up (LaPorte and Lussier 2011; Beissinger and Kotkin 2014; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2017).

This book's objective is to study the legacy of one of the core institutions of the Communist regime, which (under different names) ruled Russia from 1917 to 1991: the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Party's importance for Soviet society (mirrored by similar roles of ruling parties in other Communist states) is a reason for us to claim that it should have cast a particularly strong shadow in the post-Communist environment. The CPSU, which the 1977 Soviet constitution described as the "leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system," penetrated various institutions of social and political life; CPSU membership was a prerequisite for some careers (e.g., bureaucrats, journalists, artists, military officers) and a very helpful step for many others. CPSU members were subject to intensive indoctrination by Soviet propaganda through the "party learning" system, but they were also among the first to learn how the Soviet system truly worked – namely, with the use of informal networks to overcome the omnipresent deficit of goods and the patronal relations in politics.

From a theoretical standpoint, the CPSU legacy is Janus-faced – that is, can be interpreted from two conceptual angles. The first angle suggests that we treat the CPSU legacy as a specific and understudied example of the Leninist legacies that we referred to at the beginning of this section. The research, for example, has shown the persistence of political organizations in inheriting the traditions of the Communist parties, which, for decades after transition, continued to matter in many post-Communist countries, and in some cases managed to return to power (Orenstein 1998; Bozoki and Ishiyama 2002; Grzymala-Busse 2002). Our study suggests that the imprint of the Communist Party, at least in the Russian case, goes well beyond that: the former members of the CPSU, even if they did not join the new Communist Party of the Russian Federation (most did not) or abandoned their belief in the Communist ideology (most did not believe in it either way), became "agents of persistence" of social practices, institutions, and norms. Thus, an important contribution of our book, from this Leninist legacies perspective, is that we depart from the idea that all Soviet citizens were affected by the Soviet legacy to the same extent, and we single out a particular group that could have remained a crucial factor in legacy survival. Although in the final days of the USSR the CPSU turned out to be much less powerful and unified than it claimed to be (which is probably why there is little research on how its legacies affected post-Communist development), we attempt to show that there are more subtle legacies of the CPSU that survived all subsequent political changes in Russia.

The second angle is to interpret the phenomenon we are interested in as a (neo)patrimonial legacy. It is debatable how much “Communism” was in the Communist Party already in the Brezhnev era: an organization consisting of “cold unbreakable cynics and career seekers”⁸ is unlikely to represent the Communist ideals, ideology, and philosophy in any form. The legacy of the CPSU from this point of view should be associated with persistent patron–client networks, informal political culture, rent-seeking, and opportunism. Former Russian prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, known for his colorful quotes, once remarked that “whatever party we try to create, we still get the CPSU.”⁹ Paraphrasing this quote, whatever political system Russia tries to create, the legacies of the CPSU guide it toward a similar rent-seeking regime based on informal power coalitions (Gel'man 2017). This is in line with the existing literature on legacies of authoritarian and clientelistic regimes. A classical argument by O'Donnell et al. (2013), Linz and Stepan (1996), and Acemoglu et al. (2011) suggests that legacies of authoritarian regimes – laws and constitutions, but also bureaucracies and powerful interest groups – can facilitate the capture of new democratic politics by old elites. Charron and Lapuente (2013) show how historical traditions of clientelism influence the quality of governance in the European regions. Camargo and Rivera (2016) document the persistence of clientelistic practices and corruption in posttransition Mexico. Similar evidence can be found in other parts of the world.

The image and the stories surrounding the Moscow Metro lay the groundwork for central concern of this book: the deep understanding of the nature of legacy and its encompassing definition. The book explores the contrast between elegant luxury and inspiring images as compared to actual efficiency and safety, notes patterns of behavior of officials and population, attempts to understand the mentality of both, and traces factors that account for these specific patterns of behavior of those “in power” and people as “their subjects.” The book establishes a dialogue with the history of the CPSU, its nature, and its impact on society starting from the 1950s, and traces its power through the late 1980s, focusing on how in these decades the CPSU was still present and survived into the second half of the 2010s. The legacy of the CPSU explains several

⁸ Andrei Kolesnikov, a well-known Russian journalist, uses this phrase to describe the Komsomol activists. However, Kolesnikov's remark is even more applicable to the CPSU. In the same article, in fact, he writes that the former Komosomol members, after joining the Party, brought even more “cynicism and dirt” into the system (www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/columns/2018/10/30/785154-v, accessed November 1, 2019).

⁹ https://pikabu.ru/story/znamenityie_frazyi_chernomyirdina_ochen_dlinnopost_799227, accessed November 1, 2019.

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modern-day phenomena that remain puzzling for an outsider; this book addresses such issues as modern relationships between people and power in Russia, corruption, lack of tolerance, low innovation activity, and income inequality, and, above all, it sheds light on the popularity of Vladimir Putin.

Our empirical focus is not on the individual behavior of CPSU members that could persist after the collapse of the USSR: we show that the effects associated with a larger presence of CPSU members have macroscopic implications for society-wide phenomena, such as inequality, development of political democracy, and bureaucratic corruption. To study these macroscopic implications, we rely on cross-regional variation within a single country. If one accepts the conceptualization of the CPSU legacy as a Leninist one, this subnational focus offers another interesting contribution of our book. Unlike existing research, which mostly focuses on the cross-national differences between Communist experiences and legacies, our focus is on within-country variation. We show that even in a country such as Russia, which was ruled with an iron fist through a highly centralized political system throughout the Soviet era, Communist legacies are region-specific and determine the particular paths of social and political development that Russian regions took after the fall of the USSR. From the point of view of the (neo)patrimonial regime's legacies interpretation, a subnational analysis allows us to point out the heterogeneity of rule within the supposedly homogenous and hierarchical political regimes. There are more subtle differences in how an authoritarian regime runs a country than analysis of institutions and formal modes of governance would suggest. Focusing on approximately eighty regions of a single country controls for many intervening variables and unobserved heterogeneity, which is not possible in a cross-national analysis.

In addition to studying historical legacies, we contribute to the broad research on political transition in various contexts, which has attracted a lot of scholarly attention (Carothers 2002; Schmitter 1991, 1996; Schmitter and Karl 1991, 1994; Karl and Schmitter 1995; Schmitter and Santiso 1998; O'Donnell et al. 2013; Sakwa 2012). Furthermore, we build upon the extensive research on Russian subnational politics (Hale 2003, 2008; Giuliano 2006, 2011; Gel'man 1999; Orttung 2004; Dininio and Orttung 2005; Reisinger and Moraski 2017), which demonstrated the importance of this dimension for understanding Russian political development, as well as the ability of Russian regions to serve as a laboratory for studying important questions of comparative politics (see also the more general argument on using post-Communist settings in comparative research in Frye 2012).

Currently, Russia does not give any promise of democratization at the national level; if anything, the situation is worsening in this respect. Understanding the role of historical legacies has become more important than ever. Our book attacks this problem from the ground up – approaching subnational regions of Russia – which allows for a better understanding of the whole nation-state. In fact, while there are numerous studies that focus on the long-term path dependencies of Russian history, our book shows that while historical legacies matter, they are highly region-specific in explaining the different paths that Russian regions took after the collapse of the USSR. Reisinger and Moraski (2017) show the importance of subnational autocratization for the development of autocracy at the national level in Russia; this argument makes it even more important to scrutinize the driving forces, the endurance, and the stability of subnational autocracies, as well as other aspects of subnational political and social institutions.

This book could be an important contribution not only to area studies (Russia and post-Communism), but also to theories of historical legacies worldwide, given its focus on specific mechanisms of legacy persistence – precisely the topic that is essential for contemporary legacy research in political science and social sciences in general. However, we do not merely look at the emergence of legacies; we also attempt to compare the “temporal depth” of various legacies (i.e., we look at the moment of time at which historical data allow us to predict contemporary variations of politics, society, and institutions) and to measure the “dissipation of legacies” (i.e., whether the impact of the past indeed lessens over time). We are aware of very few studies that explicitly attempt to do so, in many cases because of data limitations; our book is among the first to systematically question the moment when the variation in the CPSU membership rate across Russia became a good predictor for particular contemporary social phenomena and to show how the CPSU legacies’ impact diminished (or, in some cases, persisted) over time after the fall of the USSR. Finally, the book overcomes the traditional challenge of studies of historical legacies by addressing not only instances when legacies have survived, but also those instances when legacies have faded away.

The Moscow Metro is a good metaphor for the CPSU legacy: the subway was built below the grounds of the headquarters of the Soviet single-party regime (the Kremlin), and it continues to serve the same fundamental purpose in the current regime. This purpose is to be a foundation for everything listed above – the upper part of the iceberg may change its form due to climate change and modification by the sun,

but what lies below the icy surface of the water remains essentially the same and maintains the upper-level structure of the iceberg.

1.3 Empirical Strategy

The core of this book is the quantitative large-N analysis of a dataset of Russian subnational regions. We assemble a large array of variables extracted from different time periods of Soviet development (from the 1950s to the 1980s) and from the contemporary development of the Russian state. An important innovation of the book is the approach to measuring CPSU saturation at the subnational level. Given the state of Soviet statistics, obtaining information on the share of CPSU members in individual regions of Russia is a rather difficult task. In this book, our approach is based on the analysis of information published in the minutes of the Party congresses since the 1950s. Based on these data, we compute the approximate number of Communists in each region of Russia and are thus able to demonstrate both the dynamics of CPSU membership over time and the substantial differences in CPSU saturation across different Russian provinces. We validate our proxy using archival research and confirm the accuracy of our way of measuring the CPSU membership rate. We show that the rate of CPSU membership (*CPSU saturation*) was highly unequal across the subnational units. Based on that, we show that contemporary characteristics of these units are driven by Soviet-era CPSU saturation, and we investigate possible mechanisms to explain this persistence.

The subsequent analysis then looks at the comovement between contemporary regional characteristics and historical CPSU saturation. Our dependent variables come from various sources and are derived from different theoretical arguments; however, they all are linked as they constitute part of the *limited access order* existing in Russia (we will discuss this theoretical concept and its relation to our variables in Chapter 2). To start with, we acknowledge that there are significant political differences between regions of Russia, to the extent that one can describe them as having different political regimes, ranging from subnational isles of authoritarianism to more pluralist polities. We use the acknowledged Carnegie Center's index of democratization in the regions of Russia to capture this variation. Furthermore, Russian regions differ greatly in terms of corruption: e.g., in the demand for bribes by bureaucrats, in the willingness of the population to pay bribes, and in the attitude toward bribery. Several large public opinion surveys based on region-representative samples (implemented by FOM [Fond Obshchestvennoe Mnenie], a recognized Russian polling agency) are used to capture this