Rhetoric and rationality: A study of democratization in the Soviet Union [*]

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Abstract. Can political actors use rational strategies for political conflict when established institutions are unavailable to structure political choices because the institutions are themselves among the contested issues? In Soviet politics from 1985 to 1991, cross-cutting cleavages placed in question the possibility of any stable outcome. We argue that a multi-dimensional issue space was reduced to a single dimension, along which Mikhail Gorbachev could temporarily occupy a median, by the interaction between Gorbachev's own rhetoric and rhetorical tactics used by leaders of his *nomenklatura* opposition, by Boris Yeltsin as the leader of the democratic opposition, and by single-issue groups called *neformaly*. The match between these four players' rhetorics and the four strategic options identified by a simple spatial model offers empirical evidence that rational strategies were available despite institutional flux.

1. Introduction

Can politicians follow rational strategies in the absence of established institutions that structure political choices? Democratization is by definition a time of institutional flux, when the rule of politics are not fixed. We investigate whether rational strategies are possible in such circumstances by comparing the expectations of a rational model of political action to the rhetoric of the principle participants in the Soviet transition toward democracy during 1989–1990.

Much research presents politics in the Soviet Union before the August 1990 coup as a conflict pitting reformers against those officials within the *nomenklatura* (party and government bureaucrats) who tried to defend the status quo. Several observers have portrayed Mikhail Gorbachev playing a centrist role in this conflict: aware of some nomenklatura officials' fear that public demonstrations organized by single-issue groups called "*neformaly*" might topple them from power, he exploited the officials' anxiety to gain their grudging approval of his proposals for limited reforms promising to ease public discontent (see Breslaner, 1989; Hongh, 1989; Bova, 1989; Roeder, 1993). In this respect Gorbachev emerges as a liberalizer comparable to those said by several recent studies to occupy the political center between hard-liners and democratizers during transitions to democracy in various countries (see Di Palma, 1990; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Przeworski, 1991).

The portrait of Gorbachev occupying a median in a unidimensional politics of perestroika conceals a previously unrecognized puzzle. Reporting a survey of public opinion in the former USSR in 1990, Finifter and Mickiewicz (1992) call attention to the "multidimensionality of attitudes toward the complex of reforms introduced in the Gorbachev era." They observe that preferences expressed on the issue of whether the state or the individual should bear responsibility for economic well-being were not correlated with support for a transition to democratic institutions. Taking the responses to the question of state or individual responsibility as an index of support for Gorbachev's market reforms, Finifter and Mickiewicz conclude that he needed to assemble a coalition composed of separate groups of supporters for different kinds of reform.

Finifter and Mickiewicz's (1992) conclusions have since been questioned by Duch (1993) and by Miller et al. (1994). Criticizing Finifter and Mickiewicz for relying on a single item to measure support for economic reform, both critics find that when measured by scales composed of multiple items, support for market reforms is strongly correlated with support for democracy. However, both critics report Cronbach's alphas for their scales ranging from .58 (Duch) to maxima of .63 to .68 for subsamples of their survey (Miller et al., 1994). Duch (1993), moreover, explicitly admits that factor analysis of the items used in his scale to measure market reform revealed the presence of two dimensions. While the level of Cronbach's alpha acceptable for the construction of a unidimensional scale is partly a matter of the researcher's taste, we would interpret the critics' findings as failing to reject the Finifter and Mickiewicz conclusion about the multidimensionality of popular attitudes toward this pair of issues.

Finifter and Mickiewicz's (1992) finding of multidimensionality is further supported by interviews with ranking politicians of the Gorbachev years who

recount disagreements over how to coordinate different reform issues. Interviewed by one of the authors in Moscow in October 1992, Yuri Prokof'ev recalled that as second secretary of the Moscow city committee in early-1989, he approached the first secretary to question the wisdom of Gorbachev's effort to proceed with democratic and market reforms at the same time. Prokof'ev argued instead that the Soviet party should emulate the Chinese course, proceeding with market reforms in the near term and delaying the move to democracy until a market economy was well established. Gorbachev learned of the conversation and, encountering Prokof'ev in a Kremlin staircase, braced him with, "So you're a panicker!" (*paniker*, a word frequently encountered in Gorbachev's public speeches). Interviewed at the Gorbachev Foundation in October 1993, former Politburo member and ideology secretary Vadim Medvedev said that several Politburo members wanted to disentangle economic, agricultural, ethnic, and legal reform from the political reforms advocated by Gorbachev, either delaying political reform or hastily completing a limited version in order to avoid interference with other policy issues.

In general, multidimensional issue spaces are highly unlikely to feature stable medians of the kind commonly (and we believe correctly) said to have been occupied by Gorbachev. Where institutions are fixed, they may be designed to limit or prohibit cycling among outcomes for which majority support varies depending on the order in which they are compared. Investigating the same problem in nineteenth-century New Zealand, Nagel (1993) has recently argued that verbal behavior, of a kind labeled "heresthetics" by William Riker (1982), could substitute for the absence of institutional limits on cycling. We prefer the term "rhetoric," used not in the meaning of "persuasion" but in the looser original sense "oratory," to Riker's neologism. Examining the rhetoric used by Gorbachev, by leaders of the nomenklatura opposition, by his radical opponent Boris Yeltsin, and by the neformaly, we argue that rhetorical tactics succeeded in creating a short-run stability by reducing this multi-dimensional space to a single dimension opposing radical reformers to the nomenklatura, a dimension along which a median was temporarily available to Gorbachev. This temporary stability contributed to, but also limited, the gradualistic transition toward democracy manifest during the period of perestroika.

We use speeches as evidence because unlike other possible evidence about political strategies in the Soviet period, speeches offer evidence of what broad Soviet audiences were directed to ascribe to individual actors. In a stimulating article, Anderson and Boettke (1993) have justifiably made much of the gap between rhetoric and performance during the Gorbachev years. Gorbachev proposed economic reforms, but the resulting changes in economic institutions redistributed opportunities for officials to extract quasi-rents rather than

diminishing the sum of quasi-rents by relaxing state controls. We agree that performance greatly diverged from rhetoric, but whereas Anderson and Boettke (1993) ascribe the gap to Gorbachev's strategic insincerity, we conceive policy actions by the Soviet government as a compound combining (a) Gorbachev's decrees (issued with the reluctant assent of Politburo conservatives who feared popular unrest if they refused) and (b) shirking by rent-seeking bureaucrats, encouraged by the Politburo conservatives, who exploited the limits on his monitoring capacity to implement the decrees to their own advantage regardless of Gorbachev's intent (Anderson, 1993: Ch. 2). Given our argument, we do not think that Gorbachev's or his opponents' individual strategies can be assessed simply by observing their joint, or "public," choices. The texts printed in newspapers and stenographic records of meetings, on the other hand, represent signals attributed by the press to Gorbachev and his various opponents as individuals. Because the press might misreport what they actually said, it would have been necessary for him and for his opponents to consider how the press would report their statements when deciding what to say, but since we have no direct evidence of the actual statements, but only the press reports, we do not model these decisions. We assume that for attentive Soviet publics (and for us as observers), these texts could serve as "cheap summary indicators" (Peltzman, 1984: 183) of Gorbachev's and other political actors' efforts to bid for support from official and popular audiences by offering political alternatives.

2. An informal model of Soviet politics, 1985–1991

Below we offer an abstract model of state-society relations in the Soviet Union during 1989–1990, identifying the strategic resources and constraints faced by the various actors. Like all rational models, this model gains tractability at the expense of oversimplifying an admittedly far more complex reality.

2.1. *The players*

We model the game as having four key sets of actors: Gorbachev and his allies (G), the conservative members of the nomenklatura (N), grass-roots reformers "from below" (R) composed of neformaly ("informals" or unregistered citizens' groups), cooperatives (private businesses), and strike committees representing workers, and Yeltsin and other democrats.

2.1.1. *Nomenklatura*
Communist Party officials and government bureaucrats who resist reforms are decisive in that no winning coalition can exist without them, since Gorbachev

did not control a stable majority of the Politburo, as his former speechwriter recounts (Cherniaev, 1993: 291, 295–297, 322) and as we document below. The nomenklatura officials are assumed to be trying to preserve a status quo in which they enjoy a wide range of special privileges and control the enactment and execution of official policy, but they are also unwilling to risk losing office as a result of a confrontation with a fully mobilized mass public enraged by their arbitrary conduct. When we use the word "nomenklatura" to refer generally to officials who opposed reforms, we remain aware that some members of the nomenklatura at all levels welcomed reform even though it would reduce the existing powers and privileges of the nomenklatura as a whole. As Anderson and Boettke (1993: 108) point out, some supportive officials welcomed reform because they expected to win even greater powers and privileges under a new system. In any case, if we suppose that opponents in the nomenklatura were few or uninfluential, we have difficulty understanding why Politburo conservatives went to the trouble of signaling their opposition to reform or why Gorbachev engaged in issue packaging.

2.1.2. *Gorbachev and his allies*
The motivations behind Gorbachev's actions during perestroika remain disputed even today. Following a substantial body of literature, we shall treat him as a "balancer." By existing rules, Gorbachev's lack of a Politburo majority precludes him from imposing his will on either the nomenklatura or the public, and he seeks limited but still very substantial reforms on a variety of fronts in order to placate an angry public that might otherwise seek to expel the nomenklatura conservatives from office. As a centrist Gorbachev may seek enactment of policy proposals favored either by the reformers or by the nomenklatura, depending on how fully each wing mobilizes its members and their powers; that is, he may move either right or left. As long as both wings mobilize, however, he cannot move all the way to either way.

2.1.3. *Grass-roots reformers*
Within two years after Gorbachev's succession in March 1985, the Politburo decided for the first time to tolerate the formation of interest groups not under the control of official organizations (see Berezovskii and Krotov, 1990: 19). One kind, the neformaly or "informal" organizations, proliferated rapidly. They were estimated to number 30,000 by December 1987 and 60,000 by March 1989 (although these totals were never substantiated and included many apolitical clubs devoted to leisure activities) (see Bonnell, 1990). Another kind of special-interest organization was the so-called "cooperative," which sprang up after the passage of the Law on Individual Labor Activity in May 1987. Cooperatives were partnerships (often individual entrepreneurs masquerading as partners with their employees) engaged in a variety

of private businesses. Workers' committees also began to appear, and in July 1989 coal miners worked up to a strike that, although partly resulting from local disputes, spread from the mines in the Kuzbass to the mines of Vorkuta and Donetsk. Not only coal miners struck; the head of government said that together with ethnic conflicts, strikes had cost 9.5 million person-days in the first four months of 1990, and seven million person-days in all of 1989 (*Pravda*, 25 May 1990).

Members of the neformaly, cooperatives and workers' groups could exert pressure on the nomenklatura by strikes, street demonstrations, and campaigning. Two Communist Party authors sympathetic to the informals described their challenge to the nomenklatura: "informal associations ..., trying to promote their own opinions, revive and routinize democratic forms of struggle previously eliminated from our practice, including some to which the established political and social-economic structures are painfully sensitive: mass rallies, the nomination of their own candidates for people's deputy, and even the establishment of parallel structures of political power" (Churbanov and Nelinbin, 1990: 9).

Our model does not depend on an assumption that every informal organization forms preferences along only one issue dimension. As reforms were frustrated, informals particularly in Ukraine, the Baltics and the Caucusus republics formed broad coalitions that linked issues within those republics, particularly tying together demands for national independence with ecological concerns. Nevertheless, as long as the informals can exert more pressure when both umbrella groups and single-issue groups join in protest actions, there is an incentive for reformers to adopt strategies that incorporate the groups with single-issue preferences.

2.1.4. *Yeltsin and the "democrats"*

While most neformaly organized for change on particular substantive issues, during the campaign preceding the March 1989 elections individual candidates and groups of supporters declared their opposition to the Communist party's monopoly of the right of political organization. Prominent among these candidates was Boris Yeltsin. These candidates and their supporters gained the name "democrats" by making demands for replacement of the communist monopoly with majority rule.

2.2. *Strategies in the game*

With only one issue dimension (e.g., democracy versus authoritarianism, or the command economy versus the market), a center or median voter position would always exist. In contrast, in the multi-dimensional issue space documented by Finifter and Mickiewicz (1992), a single "center" position capable

of commanding majority support in pairwise competition against every possible alternative – i.e., a single median or core – never exists except under the very restrictive condition that the supporters and opponents of the centrist policy are distributed symmetrically along every dimension (see, e.g., Riker, 1982; or Ordeshook, 1986: 349–353).

Five basic strategies, each with its own vulnerability, exist for coping with the absence of a core in multidimensional politics. First, if subsets of the electorate hold particularly strong views on each of the dimensions, it may be possible to assemble a coalition of "intense minorities" (Downs, 157), but the coalition is vulnerable to disruption by "divide and rule" counterproposals (Kadane, 1972) and is very difficult to organize and enforce when any of the different interest groups' goals conflict. Second, an organizer may seek to package a generally centrist position located at the median on each issue dimension, but that strategy is vulnerable to coalitions composed of elements from both extremes and formed by making special concessions to a particular intense minority, especially if the views of the participants in the coalition about a given issue are far from the median position on that issue.[1] Third is disaggregation of political choices, separating issues by acting along one dimension at a time. This strategy produces what Shepsle (1979) called "structurally induced" equilibrium (for literature, see Krehbiel, 1988), but it depends on prior agreement about the institutional structure for reaching decisions. Fourth is ambiguity about specific issues in favor of establishing procedural norms, such as the idea that choices should be made in a democratic fashion, but this strategy is vulnerable to warnings about the consequences for specific issues of the adoption of democratic procedures (Shepsle, 1972). Fifth is advocacy of strong supra-majoritarian consensus, or supra-majoritarian decision procedures, in order to create policy positions that, once in place, are invulnerable to overthrow (Schofield, Grofman and Feld, 1988), but by broadening the number of participants with a veto over change, this strategy tends to privilege the status quo and is therefore unsuitable for reformers who face significant opposition.

If rational action were infeasible when established institutions are unavailable to structure politics, this set of strategies should not describe the behavior of political actors in the Soviet Union before the August 1991 coup. To refute this null hypothesis, we now turn to presenting evidence that the first strategy was pursued (unsuccessfully) by grass-roots reformers, the second by Gorbachev, the third by his nomenklatura opponents, the fourth by Yeltsin and his fellow democrats; none of the four players pursued the fifth, which is infeasible when significant opposition to reform exists. Gorbachev proposed the adoption of perestroika as an "issue package" – a set of policy proposals in which acceptance of any proposal was said to be dependent on acceptance of
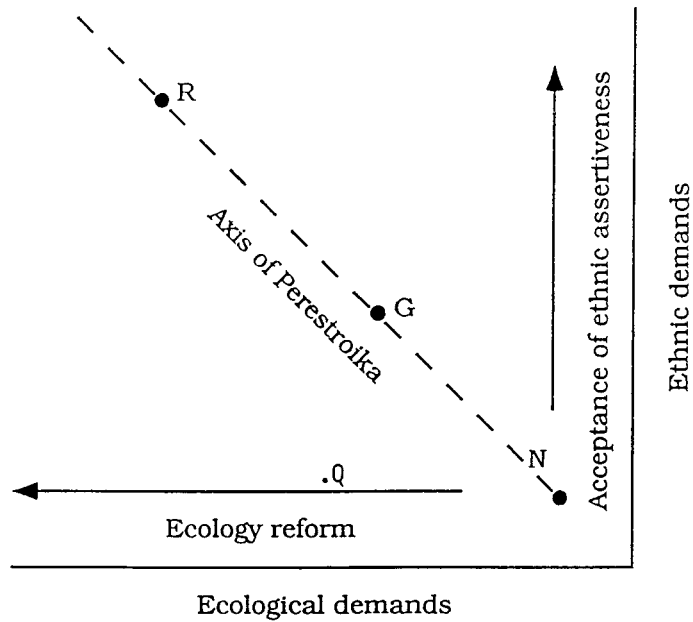
Figure 1.

all the rest. The nomenklatura's representatives directly opposed such issue packaging by proposing to separate issues. Yeltsin emphasized procedural changes over reforms of particular policies. We argue that the players' adoption of these three strategies, together with the failure of the neformaly to achieve any cohesive nationwide organization and everyone's avoidance of the infeasible fifth strategy, made possible the appearance of the single issue dimension along which Gorbachev is often portrayed as occupying a centrist position.

We can illustrate our hypothesized Soviet bargaining game by simplifying it to two dimensions (which represent issues of, e.g., ethnicity and ecology) as in Figure 1.

In the two-dimensional policy space presented in Figure 1, the horizontal (leftward) arrow symbolizes popular forces (neformaly) organized to support ecological reform. The vertical (upward) arrow symbolizes popular forces (neformaly) favoring policies more responsive to ethnic concerns.[2] The probable outcome of bargaining one issue at a time is shown by the point N.

We assume that the nomenklatura officials could affect policies actually pursued by the Soviet state, and that their decisions depended on the combination of (a) their own policy preferences and (b) their desire to avoid having the neformaly engage in excessive demonstrations, civil disobedience, strikes,

or other protest actions. We further assume that the willingness of the nefor- maly to stage protests depended on how many people they could summon into the streets to face possible police counteraction. Under these assump- tions, each policy must be a tacit bargain between the nomenklatura and the neformaly. Because not all neformaly care about policy change along all issue dimensions, if the nomenklatura can arrange to have each issue negoti- ated separately, the compromise should be closer to the nomenklatura's ideal point.

The point N represents the set of policies most favorable to the nomenklatura that also pacifies the neformaly located along any issue dimension considered in isolation.[3] What the neformaly actually want we have symbolized by the point R, which represents the platform that combines the preferred points of the neformaly organized along each separate issues dimension. While the policies at point N represent the best the neformaly can obtain from the nomenklatura if they negotiate along each dimension separately, and the point R reflects what they might get if they could put together (and keep together) a coalition of intense minorities that would break up present power relationships, the point G is intended to reflect "compromise" policies proposed by Gorbachev, a "perestroika package."

As long as G is up and to the left of N, G corresponds to a point along either dimension which the neformaly along that dimension strictly prefer to what they can get from the nomenklatura by bargaining one issue at a time. Knowing that they can never get R as long as the nomenklatura retains the right to decide policy, the neformaly should be willing to accept G. On the other hand, the nomenklatura must fear that if it rejects G, the neformaly and cooperatives will resolve their differences and form the coalition at or close to point R. Such a coalition would be able to mobilize more participants in street demonstrations and strikes than the neformaly along any single dimension, and consequently it might extract more far-reaching concessions from the nomenklatura or threaten the destruction of the system whose privileges they enjoy. Thus G is an issue package attractive to both the nomenklatura and its popular opposition (the neformaly and cooperatives) by bundling the diverse issue dimensions into a single all-or-nothing choice which all actors prefer to their available alternatives.

One obvious question is why the nomenklatura and neformaly could not simply converge on a bargain at G, dispensing with Gorbachev. This compro- mise would require the neformaly and cooperatives to organize themselves into a national coalition, or party, behind Yeltsin or some other leader, who would conduct the bargaining with the nomenklatura. One answer is straight- forward. As formation of a rival political party was illegal until February 1990, a bargaining partner for the nomenklatura could not emerge. Yeltsin himself

remained a member of the Communist Party Central Committee, subject to its discipline, until July 1990. The nomenklatura claimed an exclusive right to act as the sole institution organized across issues. Its spokesmen denied the existence of any "other political force capable of ... resisting the centrifugal tendencies in society" (Kriuchkov in *Pravda*, 5 Nov. 1989; cf. Ligachev, 9 Dec. 1989). What made Gorbachev indispensable was a combination of his assiduous effort to keep himself acceptable to as many groups as possible, and their reluctance or inability to negotiate directly with each other.

Alternatively, rather than accept G, the nomenklatura can offer policies like those represented by the point Q in the figure. These offers disrupt the consensus among the neformaly in favor of Gorbachev's issue package. The ecology-minded groups prefer Q to G, and Q is no worse than the minimum the ethnic-minded groups could extract. Shepsle pointed out that by forcing consideration of issues one at a time, germaneness rules in Congress could prevent the consideration of alternatives like Q, thereby stabilizing the policy (Shepsle, 1979). But in the Soviet context, no rule prohibits the nomenklatura from offering Q, and indeed some officials' speeches did offer concessions on ecology that seemed intended to break up alliances between ecological neformaly and ethnic separatists (for an example, see the next section).

In the abstract, it would appear that, if the neformaly and cooperatives remained predominantly single-issue groups,[4] Gorbachev's conservative opponents should have been able to counter his centrist strategy by offering concessions on selected policy issues to some of the democrats in return for those democrats' departure from the democratic coalition.[5] Gorbachev sought to guard against attempts to buy off key actors on a given issue dimension and thus reduce the size of the coalition pushing for reform by insisting that his proposals being treated as a complete package. By proposing movement in the direction of reform along several dimensions at once, claiming that any proposed reform would fail unless it was accompanied by enactment of all the rest, he offered all the neformaly an alternative to the nomenklatura's bids to divide them. The response of the neformaly to the choice between Gorbachev's package and the nomenklatura's selective concessions depended on the neformaly memberships' relative trust of Gorbachev and other Politburo members. Our model differs from explanations of perestroika that rely on universal public antagonism to the nomenklatura, as in our model even a slight "generalized benefit of the doubt" for the proponent of the issue package can be shown to be sufficient to safeguard the package against selective concessions – a crucial point given the rapid dwindling of Gorbachev's public support during 1989 (see Feld and Grofman, 1991).[6]

3. Rhetorical niches and the Soviet bargaining game

The model we have proposed implies that four rhetorical niches will be open for occupancy. The first is a niche for an issue-packager (Gorbachev), the second is a nicht for advocates for the status quo who will seek to fight issue-by-issue delaying actions (the nomenklatura), the third is a niche for single-issue groups (various neformaly and cooperatives), and the fourth is a niche for advocacy of democratic procedures (Yeltsin and others).

In the first niche, Gorbachev should present perestroika as an issue package. The purpose of the package is to counteract the possibility that separate consideration of issues will divide the reform coalition. He should also find ways to present himself as the center of a political spectrum defined by the nomenklatura at one end and the democrats at the opposing end.

In the second niche, spokesmen for the nomenklatura should advocate any strategy that moves the bargain toward N, the best available outcome for the nomenklatura. Their basic strategy should be to call for considering issues separately, seeking to split the reform coalition by selective payoffs. Calls for separation of issues can take various forms, however. For example, nomenklatura advocates can call for a slowdown in the pace of reform on some issues while endorsing prompt action on others, or they can demand the prohibition of some of the more extremist neformaly for the purpose of moving the center of the political spectrum toward their end by exclusion of the opposite extreme.

In the third niche, advocates for the neformaly and cooperatives should advocate a strategy that moves the bargain toward the point R. With each group demanding a policy at the point on its own dimension that corresponds to R, all the neformaly hope to organize a coalition of minorities that can insist on R.

In the fourth niche, democrats such as Yeltsin try to substitute for the non-existent coalition of neformaly and cooperatives by introduction of democratic procedures, particularly majority voting. If the nomenklatura is unpopular, candidates from the neformaly and cooperatives will defeat its candidates in elections. Then a majoritarian legislature can adopt R, because the nomenklatura will no longer control policy. The advantage of focusing on procedure rather than issues in the issues' divisiveness within the neformaly and cooperatives.

We now turn to observation of whether Soviet political rhetoric fits into these niches. Of necessity our examples are limited. We believe them to be representative. We focus on the period from January 1989, when candidates for the new Congress of People's Deputies were making election speeches, through June 1990, when decisions by the Congress of the Communist Party

that gravely weakened the organs for leadership of the nomenklatura, the Politburo and Central Committee, changes the incentives facing the actors.

3.1. *Niche 1: Gorbachev – an issue-packaging centrist?*

The model implies that Gorbachev (and his allies) should package issues and explicitly identify themselves with the center. By simplifying multidimensional issue politics, an issue package makes plausible the claims by Gorbachev (and his allies) that they occupy the center of a unidimensional political spectrum with conservatives at one end and radical democrats at the other.

 We should begin by noting that the identification of issue packaging in Gorbachev's rhetoric is complicated by the absence from Russian of any phrase that corresponds precisely to "issue package." The word for "issue" is "*vopros*" (literally "question") and the word for "package" is "*paket*," but nobody would say "*paket voprosov*." Gorbachev used a variety of words, such as the noun "*kompleks*" (a complex), the adjective "*vzaimosviazannyi*" (interconnected), or the adverbs "*odnovremenno*" (simultaneously) and even "*sinkhronno*" (synchronously). We could legitimately have translated any of these phrases as "issue package." Instead the literal translations below undoubtedly seem more ambiguous than they are, because Russia did not present Gorbachev with the linguistic resources to communicate the idea of an issue package in terms convenient for translation into English. When we read passages like his statement, "The policy of perestroika is a system of interconnected revolutionary measures which can be expected to accomplish their goals only if they are adopted as a complex" (*Pravda*, 24 Feb. 1989; see also 8 Jan., 27 Mar. 1989; 29 May 1990; *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS*, 5–7 Feb. 1990: 352), we do not see how to avoid the inference that Gorbachev was presenting perestroika as an issue package in which nothing would be accomplished unless movement on every issue accompanied movement on any issue.

 In addition to positive statements in favor of issue packaging, Gorbachev called attention to proposals for the separation of issues and explicitly rejected them:

> [S]ometimes in our controversies the thought is expressed, one way or another, that we can tear some problem out of context, as they say, jump all over it and settle it. I don't think that this is proposed from the worst motives. At the same time we know from the past and now from our own experience: as soon as we fall behind in one place, this immediately and seriously affects many other areas of perestroika. So those who still think that some problems can be torn out of context or can be considered outside

their linkage with other problems and processes, they, first, are making a mistake themselves, and second, are confusing others, too (*Pravda*, 31 Mar. 1989).

Similarly,

When anyone says to us, is it really necessary to take on so many things? – their opinions can be admitted as correct only with respect to the fact that the burden of completing many tasks simultaneously is crushing. But we consider to be without foundation their arguments that it would be possible to delay political reform and the completion of other tasks and that one should first solve economic problems, feed the people, and so forth. Maybe these ideas are appealing to an uninformed person (*Pravda*, 8 Jan. 1989).

In this last quotation, "solve economic problems" refers to specific proposals that would be advanced over the next year by Nikolai Ryzhkov (head of the government with its primary function of managing the economy), while "feed the people" refers to proposals by Egor Ligachev, whe presided over the Secretariat where he bore special responsibility for agriculture.[7]

While Gorbachev most often justified his calls for coordination across issues by asserting a substantive connection among political and economic reforms, sometimes his criticisms of separating political change from economic reform were voiced in terms that drew explicit attention to the conflict among social interests over reform. He explained that "earlier reforms – in 1953, 1965 and 1966 – perished precisely because as soon as they led to the need for profound changes, through the political superstructure mechanisms of defense of the old system were immediately put into motion, and everything stopped, fell back into place" (*Pravda*, 25 May 1990). He urged participants in neformaly organized "by interests" to unify within the "channel of perestroika," warning them "against the danger of becoming scattered, of separating into groups of hobbyists, each in its own nook, and losing identity as a powerful force on our society." (*Pravda*, 16 Nov. 1989; cf. 26 Nov. 1989).

Although Gorbachev did not make explicit reference to packaging issues in every speech, when he did not, an issue package was often implicit in the macro-structural organization of his speech. Consider, for example, his speech to the First Congress of People's Deputies, the first national legislature chosen in openly contested elections since 1917. The body of the speech consists of four sections. The first begins with the statement that economic transformations are the "foundation of perestroika." The second asserts that these transformations cannot proceed unless accompanied by political democratization. The third section argues that perestroika is the means to

resolution of ethnic problems facing the multi-national Soviet society. And the fourth section says that perestroika could neither fail to affect foreign policy nor succeed if the old foreign policy were continued (*Pravda*, 31 May 1989).

Gorbachev located himself in the political center by balancing criticisms of democratic extremists with attacks on conservatives in the nomenklatura for attempting to delay perestroika (for example, *Pravda*, 31 Mar., 27 Apr., 31 May, 10 June, 19 July, 16 Nov., 10 Dec. 1989; 12 Apr., 12, 22 & 25 May 1990; *Istvestiia*, 28 May 1990). When Gorbachev's attacks on democratic extremists were not accompanied by criticisms of the nomenklatura, the attacks normally appeared in the context of discussions of ethnic separatism (*Pravda*, 16 & 24 Feb., 2 June, 16 Nov. 1989; 15 Feb., 1 June 1990; *Istvestiia*, 14 Jan. 1990). Gorbachev's readiness to join the conservatives on the issue of ethnic separatism follows naturally from the strategy we have identified. Separation from the Soviet Union would have isolated the ethnic neformaly from their allies in the democratic coalition. Gorbachev's strategy of issue packaging worked to move political outcomes toward the democratic pole, but the withdrawal of the ethnic neformaly, by diminishing the democratic coalition, would have moved political outcomes back toward the nomenklatura. Not only would be separatists' achievement of their goals pull themselves out of the democratic coalition, but they would also deprive the democrats of the support of ecological and other neformaly in the ethnic republics. Consequently, if Gorbachev was to follow an issue-packaging strategy successfully, ethnic separatism was as much of threat to him as it was to the nomenklatura advocates. Thus, he welcomed assertion of ethnic interests but opposed separatists. "We have taken and will firmly hold the course toward democratic development of society," he said. "But we cannot fail to distinguish peaceful demonstrations and rallies proceeding within constitutional limits from extremists gatherings that provoke inter-ethnic conflicts and terrorize and frighten people of other ethnicities. In response to people and groups of this kind, soft-heartedness and forgiveness are simply fatal and sometimes criminal" (*Pravda*, 20 Sept. 1989).

3.2. *Niche 2: Nomenklatura advocates*

The model implies that Politburo representatives of nomenklatura interests should seek to divide the reformers by three tactical appeals: for considering issues separately, for delay in democratization, and for prohibition of the more extremist neformaly. A natural place to look for the nomenklatura's advocates in the Communist Party's Politburo, in which most of the twelve members were unsympathetic to Gorbachev's issue package.[9]

Advocacy of separating issues (the conservatives' first strategy) took several different forms. As we would have expected, some Politburo members expressed support for particular reforms but only on the condition that their advocates separate those reforms from other aspects of the reform demands, or claimed that special circumstances in particular issue areas (such as agriculture) necessitated the isolation of those issues from the overall reform package. In addition, some Politburo members argued that individual policies proposed in Gorbachev's issue package were inconsistent with his other proposals, or simply singled out various individual issues as requiring immediate attention.

Politburo conservatives insisted that the development of separatist movements among ethnic minorities, dramatized in some cases by outbreaks of communal violence, be resolved before perestroika could continue. Gorbachev argued that ethnic conflicts could not be settled except by continuing his package of reforms, on the grounds that the conflicts originated in the suppression of ethnic rights by the overcentralized Soviet state (*Istvestiia*, 14 Jan., 2 May 1990). In contrast, Politburo members Vorotnikow, Shcherbitskii, Zaikov, Chebrikov, Ryzhkov and Ligachev argued that perestroika could not proceed without action to maintain the supremacy of central institutions.

Ligachev said a "serious blunder" had been made when the leadership had begun democratization without "discern[ing] the chief danger" (emphasis in original) and "fatal threat" posed by "powerful forces of a nationalist, separatist, anti-socialist trend" which had been "lying in wait" to take advantage of democratization (*Materialy*, 5–7 Feb. 1990: 164). Vorotnikov (chairman of the Russian legislature) said, "We clearly lack the strength for a simultaneous advance along all axes. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to think again about concentrating efforts on the priority, decisive, shock elements of perestroika ... It seems that the ethnic parameters of perestroika should be viewed precisely through the prism of all these problems."[10]

While Gorbachev concurred with calls for firm action against ethnic separatists who were inciting violence, he criticized those who, "speaking of the need for action without delay," proposed "to reduce the whole job to extraordinary measures and putting out fires" without recognizing the need to integrate an innovative ethnic policy into a larger program or democratization (*Pravda*, 2 June 1989; cf. 15 Feb., 28 Apr. 1990).

Besides ethnicity, conservatives also chose the issue of "discipline" for their arguments that action on particularly pressing or critical problems should precede further democratization. Lack of "discipline" referred to a broad range of social pathologies – failure to observe contracts, absenteeism from work, thefts, bribe-taking, maladministration, crime, summons to civil disobedience, and violence. A contrast developed between Gorbachev and conser-

vative members of the Politburo on the sequencing of democratization and restoration of discipline. In a series of public speeches, Gorbachev argued that measures to restore discipline had already been tried but had proved to be inadequate by themselves. The only remedy to indiscipline was a "well-developed sense of citizenship" that could emerge only in a democracy. Laws and decrees could maintain discipline only if most citizens complied voluntarily, and in any case "a big job of creation of legal norms" by representative institutions lay ahead before the law could accomplish its task (*Pravda*, 16 Mar. 1989; see 27 Apr., 18 May, 10 June, 20 Sept., 10 Dec. 1989; 9 & 29 May 1990). "We need today above all to use the opportunities inherent in democracy," Gorbachev said, "to introduce firm public order based on conscience [and] to strengthen legality and state discipline on all levels" (*Pravda*, 7 Nov. 1990; cf. 16 Feb. 1989). While Gorbachev argued that the solution to indiscipline was more democracy, Politburo members Zaikov, Ryzhkov, Shcherbitskii and Nikonov all argued that further democratization depended on measures to restore discipline. Zaikov (head of the Moscow party committee) said that "strengthening of conscious discipline" was "the very first condition for the development of democracy" (*Pravda*, 11 Mar. 1989; for the others, see ibid., 8 June, 18 July, 14 Dec. 1989; 29 Feb., 4 Mar. 1989).

Together with Ryzhkov and Zaikov (*Pravda*, 16 June, 21 July 1989; 25 May 1990), both Chebrikov and his replacement at the KGB and later in the Politburo, Kriuchkov, disagreed with Gorbachev's view that harsher law enforcement could not succeed unless accompanied by further democratization and legal reforms. Chebrikov said: "We already have quite a few good laws which really reflect the will of the people ... The essence of the matter lies ... in the practice of applying the legislation ..." (*Pravda*, 11 Feb. 1989; see also 28 June, 9 July, 2 Sept. 1989; 8 Feb. 1990). Gorbachev interpreted this disagreement for the public, claiming that the issue of discipline was being raised to impede democratization. "Among some people, of course, talk of discipline is nothing but yearning for the old days. This exists for sure, comrades. What can I say: he talks about discipline, but thinks about the strong hand, a return to the rule that once it has been said, do it and don't discuss it. This is present, for sure" (*Pravda*, 31 May 1989).

Agricultural policy was another area that conservatives sought to sever from the reform package. Politburo members Ligachev and Nikonov, who shared responsibility for agriculture, argued that special circumstances demanded the isolation of agricultural policy from Gorbachev's overall package of reforms designed to increase individual autonomy relative to institutions directed by nomenklatura appointees. Both Nikonov and Ligachev argued that improvements in the food supply were preconditions to further reforms. As Nikonov said, the food problem deserved attention "at the front of the line" and "can

least be deferred" (*Pravda*, 26 Feb. 1989). Ligachev called the food issue "the very first priority" (*Materialy*, 5–7 Feb. 1990: 163; cf. *Pravda*, 21 July 1989). Ligachev criticized proposals to improve food supplies by "abolishing the collective and state farms, distributing land to the peasants, and denationalizing the land" as a first step to the "denationalization of all means of production." He rejected these proposals as inappropriate to conditions prevalent in Soviet farming: "the overwhelming majority of peasants do not want to take the land and leave the collective and state farms" (*Pravda*, 7 July 1989; cf. 18 June 1990). Accordingly, he and Nikonov gave a series of speeches during 1989 in which they advocated an increase of investment in agriculture and food processing and other measures to strengthen the existing farm organizations, controlled by nomenklatura appointees, instead of Gorbachev's proposals to make farmers and food processors more autonomous (*Pravda*, 7 &9 Feb., 2, 7 & 16 Apr., 17 May, 16, 17 & 30 June 1989).

Ecology was yet another area where conservative memebers of the Politburo indicated a willingness to push for reform, but only if ecological issues were separated from broader reform questions. Politburo members Zaikov, Chebrikov, Nikonov, Ligachev and Vorotnikov all portrayed themselves as welcoming public pressures for action on the ecological issue.[11] In a speech in the former republic of Moldavia, Chebrikov (the former KGB chief now assigned to legal reform and law enforcement) encouraged local public outcry about ecological damage caused by the centralization of decision-making in Moscow, far from information about the consequences of environmentally harmful policies. But, at the same time, Chebrikov called on the ecological movement to divorce its demands from the issue of ethnic rights, insisting that all decisions must remain subject to "obligatory coordination with all-union interests according to the principles of socialist internationalism ... (*Pravda*, 11 Feb. 1989).

Politburo members Ryzhkov and Vorotnikov tried to limit the scope of democratization by claiming that Gorbachev must choose between his proposals for economic reforms and for democratization. They endorsed in the abstract both democratization and Gorbachev's proposal for "social reorientation of the economy," which referred to a shift of resources from production of investment goods to consumer goods, food and housing. But, Ryzhkov said, "The economy is incapable of operating and developing favorably in conditions of a democracy of public rallies [*mitingovoi demokratii*]."[12]

Opposition to extremism characterized statements by Ligachev, Zaikov, Vorotnikov, Chebrikov, Ryzhkov, and Shcherbitskii, who all warned that extremists were taking advantage of the democratic liberties introduced at Gorbachev's initiative to pursue anti-socialist goals. Ligachev said, "Under the cover of democracy and 'glasnost,' extremist, anti-socialist and nationalist

elements have become more active. They advance slogans against the Party ...” (*Pravda*, 17 June 1989). He and other conservatives called for defense of the Communist Party against attacks by “dark forces” and “demagogues” who were trying to mobilize the neformaly against Party rule. Ryzhkov said, “All kinds of scum has risen to the surface on the wave of healthy processes in the society. It does harm, and we do not react to it in any way. Democratic leagues, rallies of a dubious orientation – to much of this we just silently consent” (*Pravda*, 21 July 1989; see also 21 Jan., 11 Feb., 2, 3 & 12 Mar., 17, 28 & 30 June, 2 July, 9 Aug., 14 Dec. 1989; 8 Feb., 25 & 30 May 1990; *Materialy*, 5–7 Feb. 1990: 119, 165; ibid., 11, 14 & 16 Mar. 1990: 91–95, 130).

From the conservatives’ viewpoint, a particular merit of all three tactics was consistency with their claim that they fully supported Gorbachev’s program of perestroika and were disagreeing with him only over minor points of implementation. In this way they confused the issue between themselves and Gorbachev, both in the eyes of many Soviet citizens (Cherniaev, 1993: 319–322) and for some foreign analysis (Surovell, 1991). By undermining public support for Gorbachev, who bore the blame for actions which may have been instigated by conservatives such as the April 1989 Tbilisi massacre (Sobchak, 1991: 80–104), public confusion limited his ability to distance himself from nomenklatura support.

3.3. *Niche 3: Neformaly, cooperatives, and strikers*

Neformaly, cooperatives and strikers can exert more pressure on the nomen-klatura if they can cooperate, and therefore our model implies that their strategy should be to build local and national coalitions of groups pursu-ing different particular interests. In some locales this strategy succeeded, in others it failed, but conflicts of interest among diverse groups prevented the emergence of any encompassing all-union coalition.

Most “reform” groups (neformaly and cooperatives) organized around a “single issue” about which they had intense concerns. Neformaly pursued ecological restoration, tolerance of cultural practices or religious obser-vance, ethnic rights, rehabilitation of victims of political repression, femi-nism, rights of military officers, and other particularistic goals. Cooperatives sought increased incomes for their members. Strikers sought wage increases, occupational safety measures, improvements in the supply of foodstuffs and consumer goods, and control of the workplace. These pressures for change on particularistic issues raised a variety of more general political question, including the expansion of rights of participation in politics with the asso-ciated freedoms of expression and association, the development of market institutions to replace the command economy, regulation of the market to

safeguard the environment and to maintain social welfare, and devolution of power from the central government to the ethnic republics, especially Russia.

Although some of the neformaly agreed on the need for change to be achieved from below, their ability to coalesce in favor of democratic reforms was hampered by the conflicts of interests natural within a movement composed of single-issue groups. These conflicts are evident both from survey research and from direct observation of the neformaly. Finifter and Mickiewicz (1992) conclude from their opinion survey that proponents of political democracy were actually more likely to oppose than to welcome a reduction of the state's role in the economy, while proponents of economic reforms were not necessarily proponents of the right to strike or protest (Sobchak, 1991: 860–861). These contradictions in mass public opinion found reflection in conflicts among organized neformaly. Some ecological neformaly opposed cooperatives' demands for an unregulated market that would permit businesses to do further damage to the environment. Striking coal miners attacked not only the official ministries but also the formation of cooperatives in food service and retailing (Mandel, 1991). Russian nationalist neformaly demanded preservation of the Union, while Russian democratic clubs often welcomed the separatist aspirations of neformaly in the ethnic republics.

In the late 1980s, local neformaly began to combine into coalitions, often called "clubs" or "fronts," combining various single-issue groups and intended to present a broad-gauge opposition to the bureaucracy. Some groups developed full-fledged political platforms spanning virtually the entire spectrum of ideological principles (monarchism, anarchism, christian democracy, social democracy, nationalism, fascism), but the members of these political groups were the most likely to suffer arrest for their activities. The single-issue neformaly were much more likely to encounter official tolerance. Despite tendencies toward politicization and coalition, the neformaly remained organized only at a local level, failing in an August 1988 attempt to organize an umbrella organization spanning the Union or even the Russian Republic.

The experience of Moscow political clubs gives a sense of the difficulties experienced in organizing coalitions among the neformaly. In the fall of 1986 a group called the Club for Social Initiatives, KSI, formed with the support of the newspaper *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*. During 1987 KSI encouraged discussions among other neformaly leading to the creation of a Federation of Socialist Public Clubs. But those groups ready to take an open stand against socialism as practiced in the Soviet Union, together with S. Skvortsov's Fund for Social Initiatives, split off from the Federation. Then two Marxists within the Federation took their followers out to form a group called "Socialist Initiative." By the summer 1988 forty-six of these groups then coalesced again in

the Moscow Popular Front, which then built an electoral alliance with a sec-
ond coalition called the Moscow Association of Voters. These in turn became
the basis for a Russian Popular Front, formed in the fall of 1989 but encom-
passing only about fifty groups (Berezovskii and Krotov, 1990: 88), and for
a competing Interregional Association of Democratic Organizations (Semi-
na, 1990: 164–165; Ivanitskii, 1990: 287). While the Moscow Popular Front
scored dramatic victories in the March 1990 elections, the forty-six groups
participating in it encompassed only a tiny fraction of the city's neformaly;
for example, representatives of six hundred neformaly attended a conference
on ecology sponsored by the city's communist party committee (*Pravda*, 21
June 1989). Popular fronts outside the Russian Republic, like the well-known
Sajudis in Lithuania and Rukh in Ukraine, were more stable and managed
to combine more single-issue concerns under one roof (particularly linking
ethnic independence with ecology), but by virtue of their ambitions for inde-
pendence from the USSR, their formation was antithetical to a Union-wide
organization.

While the political clubs schismed and fused, private cooperatives out-
side the state sector found themselves defending their very existence against
pressure from the government and Party bureaucracy. They needed to lob-
by (normally in the form of paying bribes) for permission to operate. As a
national spokesman for the cooperative movement told an interviewer, espe-
cially during 1990 "cooperatives experienced merciless persecution ... they
were annihilated in batches, prohibited, robbed ...." Under these pressures,
the cooperatives were able to form a national lobby called the USSR League
of Associated Cooperatives (Kruglianskaia in *Istrestiia*, 7 Aug. 1991; Illesh'
and Rudner in ibid., 5 Mar. 1990; Matukovskii in ibid., 12 June 1990) but their
association did not reach beyond the cooperatives to other kinds of interest
groups.[13]

The failure to form a nationwide coalition of neformaly, cooperatives and
strikers may also have been an adaptive response to the danger of police
repression of which the popular movement remained conscious. Laba (1991),
following Piven and Cloward (1979), argues that mass movements facing
police repression are better advised to avoid consolidation into a bureau-
cratized organization, because dispersion of authority makes their leaders
harder for police to identify and their groups easier to reconstitute after police
actions.

3.4. *Niche 4: Yeltsin and other democrats*

Our model proposes that one way to deal with incompatible reform demands
is to emphasize the goal of majority rule rather than specify issue positions,
especially since issues were divisive among the participants in neformaly and

cooperatives who were most eager for change. Yeltsin's goal is to emerge as a focal point for coordination (acting as a leader in the sense suggested by Calvert (1992) of public pressure on the nomenklatura; he attempts to direct attention to common interests by downplaying divisive particulars.

Some reformers avoided particular issues in favor of a generalized support for democratization that took the form of a focus on procedure. The procedural focus and its relationship to issue conflicts dividing the mass movement was evident to Soviet observers. V. Ginzburg, a senior Academician and People's Deputy who was a Gorbachev adherent, wrote: "I am impressed that the aroused activity of the masses, or in any case of a noticeable portion of the population and of the deputies of various ranks, is taking the form of endless debates on questions of procedure ..." (*Istvestiia*, 17 May 1990).[14] Another observer commented, "The liberals, including those of 'neformaly' origin, stand in these disputes in defense of the absolute will of the majority ..." as a means of reconciling "conflicting interests" (Mareeva, 1990: 78).

Yeltsin's speeches display this preference for procedural reform over stands on issues. Evidence about his rhetoric before the August coup is sparse, since as Yeltsin himself commented after his election as chairman of the Russian Republic legislature, the official media had subjected him to an "information blockade."[15] Yeltsin addressed many of his speeches to street rallies, and official newspapers did not record their texts. Nonetheless, what is striking about his available speeches is his focus on procedure and his avoidance of the contentious issues that were dividing the opposition to the nomenklatura. Soviet commentators occasionally remarked on Yeltsin's reticence about issues. The writer Daniil Granin commented, "Some readers will not be satisfied by Yeltsin's too scanty, rather undeveloped remarks ... about where we are going ... I think this self-restraint is understandable (*Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 5 Sept. 1990; see also Tretiakov in *Moscow News*, 1989; No. 16).

In each available text, Yeltsin calls for various procedural changes that would make possible majority rule. In a speech in Perm in December 1988 he affirmed the "need to make the new electoral system as direct as possible" and urged "nationwide referendums" as "the genuine expression of the will of the entire people" (Trehub in *Report on the USSR*, 13 Jan. 1989: 6–8; see also *Report*, 24 Feb. 1989: 64). In his electoral platform of March 1989, Yeltsin wrote, "It is necessary to struggle against the existing elitist bureaucratic stratum via the transfer of power to elected bodies ..." (quoted in Lane, 1990). Addressing the first Congress of People's Deputies in May, he called for introduction by a "constitutional path" of a procedure for choosing the "leader of the state among alternative candidacies by general, equal and direct elections" and for "a real transfer of power from the party to the Soviets"

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(*Pervyi S"ezd Narodnykh Deputatov SSSR, Stenografícheskii Otchet*, Vol. II, Moscow: Izdanie Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, 1989: 43–49).

After winning election to the Congress, he began campaigning for adoption of the multi-party system. In a radio interview he called for nationwide discussions leading to its enactment (*Report*, 17 Mar. 1989: 32). In December Yeltsin repeated his appeal from the floor of the Congress after publicly issuing a summons for a general strike in favor of multiple parties (*Report*, 15, 22 & 29 Dec. 1989: 34–35). Interviewed the next month, Yeltsin said, "We must recognize in the constitution the opportunity for any political, social-polical, social organization to participate on equal terms in the life of the country and to struggle for its authority on the basis of its own platform." In the same interview he explained that "more democratic, radical decisions" were the purpose of his campaign for a seat in the Russian parliament.[16]

Their priority concern for majority rule was the reason that Yeltsin and his allies earned the title "democrats." By a rhetoric that coupled attacks on the nomenklatura with demands for thorough democratization while avoiding controversial issues, Yeltsin focused ordinary citizens' attention on their shared experience, not their conflicting interests. "People identify with Yeltsin. He is a victim of dislike on the part of higher-ups – who of us hasn't been in the same position? And he is being slighted for refusing to look for their approval – who hasn't dreamed of doing this? And the main thing – he speaks with everyone, those below and those above, in a similar way and on equal terms, smashing the hierarchical barriers which everyone, especially those below, is fed up with" (Tretiakov in *Moscow News*, 1989: No. 16).

4. Discussion

If the availability of rational political strategies to actors depended on the presence of established institutions that structure political choices, rational theories should not be capable of classifying the actors' observed behaviors when institutional procedures are in flux. In Soviet politics between 1985 and 1991, grass-roots reformers tried the well-known strategy of forming a coalition of intense minorities, but they failed because they were mostly organized in single-issue pressure groups (the neformaly), their issue concerns were diverse and conflicting, and on any given issue these groups' bargaining position was weaker than that of the nomenklatura. For reform-minded members of the elite, two alternative strategies were available. First, they could downplay specific issues in favor of advocating democratization of decision procedures; second, they could try to put together an issue package of reforms with something in it for everyone and emphasize the need for this issue package to be treated as a unified whole. We have provided some evidence that the

Yeltsin chose the first strategy and Gorbachev the second. Politburo opponents of reform responded by advocating consideration of issues one at a time, a strategy known to be suitable for blocking or delaying reforms by dividing the reform coalition. In the presence of opposition, none of these actors tried the supra-majoritarian strategy that widely distributed vetoes over change.

Acceptance of our model depends on observing that Gorbachev lacked a majority in the Politburo. If his program had commanded a stable majority, the institutional rules in force within the nomenklatura would have enabled his majority to introduce democratic institutions by decree. He would have lacked any reason to adopt a complicated strategy of issue packaging or to occupy a centrist position between conservative members of the nomenklatura and the more extreme reform groups. Thus we should have found that anti-packaging (and anti-democratic) strategies figured in the public statements of at least six of the twelve 1989 Politburo members. In fact, the evidence provided in the previous section shows that seven of the Politburo's twelve members advocated issue separation (Ligachev, Chebrikov, Shcherbitskii, Ryzhkov, Vorotnikov, Zaikov, Nikonov).

We believe we can reject an alternative explanation for this pattern, namely that issue separation was a result of division of responsibilities among Politburo members, with each advocating the priority of his own responsibilities and only the General Secretary responsible to provide a comprehensive program. The 1989 Politburo included a General Secretary, eight issue specialists and three persons with territorial responsibilities.[17] We have quoted some comments by issue specialists advocating top priority for their areas of responsibility. But among the conservatives, we also find the agricultural specialist Ligachev saying that ethnic conflict deserved top priority, the economic specialist Ryzhkov emphasizing law and order, and the law and order specialist Chebrikov calling for priority attention to ecological issues. Meanwhile, all three conservatives with territorial responsibilities also call for separating certain issues, even though they are not issue specialists. Countering Gorbachev's calls for pursuing all reforms concurrently, each conservative (issue specialist or not) demands that other reforms proposed by Gorbachev be deferred until after resolution of the issue in question. Finally, all four Politburo members whom we identify as Gorbachev supporters were issue specialists, but their speeches (which we have not presented) advocate Gorbachev's package of reforms. The decision whether to advocate issue separation or packaging is an indication of a Politburo member's political identity as a conservative or reformer, not a consequence of issue specialization.

Studies of perestroika often view Yeltsin and the nomenklatura as anchoring the left and right sides of a single dimension, with Gorbachev moving over time from right to left (although with some reversals) as Yeltsin's support

grew and the conservatives' following diminished. While we share this view, it is only compatible with Finifter and Mickiewicz's evidence of a complex multi-dimensional social reality if we can specify how multiple dimensions became reduced to one. While the Finifter and Mickiewicz evidence has been challenged, disagreements about how specific issues relate to larger concerns are precisely what politics, in the form of issue packaging and issue separation, is about. A crucial element in the explanation of the politics of perestroika is leadership rhetoric that offered a pair of alternative binary choices: to separate or to package issues, and to package issues or to decide them by majority rule. If the conservatives' rejection of the issue package would have forced them to accept the choice between it and majority rule, while the reformers' rejection of the issue package would have forced them to accept the choice between it and issue separation, Gorbachev could occupy the centrist position often ascribed to him.

Both Gorbachev's issue packaging and Yeltsin's demands for majority rule helped to counteract the tendency for the movement of grass-roots reformers to fragments. In this manner the interaction between their strategies helped to sustain the opposition between a popular movement for reform and official conservatism that stabilized the Soviet polity while its institutions were in flux. At the same time, however, their strategies also combined to impede completion of the transition to majority rule. Had Gorbachev stopped resisting Yeltsin's demands for majority rule, he would have eliminated the pair of binary alternatives in favor of a single choice between majority rule and the issue-by-issue decisions offered by the nomenklatura. While we have not provided the evidence for a further argument that raises questions beyond the scope of this paper, we would suggest that issue packaging initially worked for Gorbachev because the Party bureaucrats suffered a general inability or unwillingness to communicate with the single-issue groups. This reluctance limited their ability to circumvent Gorbachev by making their own deal with the pressure groups, as did the single-issue pressure groups' skepticism about the sincerity of bureaucrats' offers of side deals.

The ability to build a broad coalition for reform capable of withstanding attempts to split it into its component (issue-specific) parts was critical to the process of democratization in the Soviet Union. Studies of transitions to democracy in many countries have relied on the same tripartite classification of elite actors as hard-liners, liberalizers, or democratizers, and we suspect that the coalition-building tactics we have identified may have played a role in these cases too.

Notes

1. Such a strategy may still succeed if enough actors provide a certain benefit of the doubt to the position advocated by the centrist leader and refuse to consider proposals to deviate from that leader's policies unless the expected gain is substantial (Feld and Grofman, 1991).

2. The implications of Figure 1 below can readily be generalized to more than two issue dimensions, to include, for example, the market reforms sought by the cooperatives. For simplicity, and without real loss of generality, we will develop our exposition in only two dimensions.

3. While we have simplified the representation by pretending that all neformaly were single-issue pressure groups with ideal points located along one of the axes, modifying this oversimplification does not affect the basic structure of the model as long as some neformaly are indifferent to policy change along other issue dimensions, or would normally focus all their energy only for change on the policy dimension about which they are most concerned.

4. See discussion in the next section of their failure to build nationwide coalitions.

5. If the neformaly most concerned with a particular issue would accept selective concessions on that issue in return for withdrawing from the democratic coalition, the nomenklatura would gain. The willingness of members of these neformaly to join mass protest actions would diminish, weakening the ability of the democratic coalition to mobilize protesters. Diminution in the scale of protest would force Gorbachev's issue package down and to the right along other dimensions. Hoping to break up the general democratic coalition, various conservatives tried the tactic of proposing selective concessions to particular single-issue groups (especially on the issue of ecology), but their success was limited. See below.

6. Acceptance of Q, in return for defecting from the alliance with neformaly located along other dimensions (see Figure 1), requires that the ecology-minded groups and other neformaly not distrust assurances by the nomenklatura that the policies symbolized by Q will in fact be forthcoming. If the neformaly see Gorbachev as more credible than the leaders of the nomenklatura, they may prefer his package even if it offers less. In the Soviet case Gorbachev's issue package would have been safe against selective concessions if proposals by the nomenklatura faced a negative benefit of the doubt, in the form of widespread distrust of its representatives. To protect Gorbachev's issue package against offers like Q, a bias against the nomenklatura need not be universal among the population. The Feld and Grofman (1991) findings require only that a sufficient minority of voters reject the blandishments of challengers, with the adequacy of the minority dependent on the ideological distance between the incumbent and the center of the policy space. If Gorbachev occupied such a central position, a small number of neformaly members with anti-nomenklatura bias would have been sufficient to protect him against challenges at points like Q.

7. For an instance of Ligachev's proposal within one month of Gorbachev's statement, see *Pravda*, 7 Feb. 1989; for another Gorbachev rebuttal, 16 Mar. 1989.

8. We certainly do not wish to claim that Gorbachev's advocacy of an issue package never allowed him to emphasize different parts of the package at different times. As he explained, "In the process of transformations there may be stages, priorities, one or another rate of change – in other words, full synchronization is out of the question." But at the same time, he made it clear that "(p)erestroika should move consistently along all axes. We cannot allow a big gap in the execution of the planned measures" (*Pravda*, 16 Nov. 1989; cf. *Materialy*, 5–7 Feb. 1990: 352.

9. During 1989 and until its transformation in July 1990, the Politburo comprised twelve voting members (including Gorbachev). Gorbachev lacked control of the Politburo despite having been able to secure the retirement of the most conservative members of the 1985 Politburo. In September 1989, the Central Committee's acceptance of the resignations of

three of the remaining conservatives (Chebrikov, Nikonov and Shcherbitskii) seemingly titled the Politburo balance in Gorbachev's favor. But one of their replacements also revealed himself as a conservative (Kriuchkov, the KGB chief) and the other two (Ivashko and Masliukov), while clearly less conservative that the figures they replaced, were at best uncertain adherents of democratization. See *Pravda*, 3 May, 30 June 1990; cd. Sakwa, 1990: 16–20.

10. *Materialy*, 19–20 Sept. 1989: 86–87, emphasis added; for additional similar statements by Vorotnikov and other conservatives, see *Pravda*, 11 Feb., 1 4 & 11 Mar., 16 June, 21 July, 2 Sept. 1989; 25 May 1990.

11. For statements by the last three, see *Pravda*, 26 Feb., 2 July 1989; 30 June 1990; *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 23 May 1990.

12. *Pravda*, 25 May 1990; see also ibid., 14 Dec. 1989, *Materialy*, 5–7 Feb. 1990: 120; for Vorotnikov, *Materialy*, 19–20 Sept. 1989: 86; for an attack on this position by Politburo member Sliun'kov, see *Materialy*, 5–7 Feb. 1990: 218.

13. We have drawn this discussion of grass-movements from Hosking, Aves and Duncan (1992); Maliutin (1988); Sakwa (1990): 203–218; White (1990): 39–40; Brovkin (1991); Lane (1990): 100.

14. Ginzburg's comment echoed a statement by Gorbachev three weeks earlier (*Pravda*, 28 Apr. 1990).

15. *Ogonek*, 16–23 Mar. 1991. See also *Sovetskaia Molodezh'* (Riga), translated in FBIS-SOV-90-021, 31 Jan. 1990; for instances of censorship, see *Report on the USSR*, 31 Mar. 1989: 32, and compare the TASS report of 31 July 1989 with *Izvestiia*'s summary on 1 August of Yeltsin's statement to the Supreme Soviet.

16. *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 24 Jan. 1990. See also *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: Stenograficheskii Otchet*, Vol. 2 (Moskow: Politizdat), 57; *Pravda*, 17 Dec. 1989; 6 Feb., 8 July 1990; *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 25 & 30 May 1990; *Ogonek*, 16–23 Mar. 1990; and videotape of Yeltsin's address to the rally in front of the Moskva hotel, 4 Feb. 1990.

17. As conservatives we identify the two agricultural specialists (Ligachev and Nikonov), one issue specialist with responsibility for the economy (Ryzhkov), one issue specialist with responsibility for law and order (Chebrikov), and three with territorial responsibilities (Zaikov, Scherbitskii, and Vorotnikov); those we identify as Gorbachev supporters were all issue specialists, in foreign policy (Yakovlev and Shevardnadze), ideology (Medvedev), or the economy (Sliun'kov).

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