CHAPTER

1 Introduction: The Transition within the Transition

THIS BOOK IS A TALE of linked political events: a pair of recent elections in the heir to an extinct superpower, a troubled nation in whose stability, modernization, and openness to the global community the West still has a huge stake. A multitude of players jockeyed for advantage there. One particular group, to the amazement of most involved and the consternation of some, prevailed. We aim to explain how and why that happened and what difference it makes to the country, its postcommunist transition, and us on the outside.

Twice in the winter of 1999–2000, 75 million citizens of Russia flocked to their neighborhood voting stations. After a decade of rule by Boris Yeltsin, ordinary people had a say in who would lead them for the better part of the next decade. They scratched their ballots in an atmosphere crackling with uncertainty, rancor, and fear. Yeltsin's precarious health and erratic decisionmaking had marred his second term, begun in 1996. He was helpless in August 1998 to forestall a crippling financial crisis that saw the treasury default on its sovereign debt, the ruble shed four-fifths of its value, and dozens of banks shut their doors.[1] Although Russians had lived with hardship ever since marketization and privatization were launched in the early 1990s, this episode, as Yeltsin recounted later, was unique in the pain it inflicted on the winners in the reform process: "The worst of it was that it hit the barely born middle class . . . the property owners, businessmen, entrepreneurs, and professionals. . . . All this had been undertaken for their sake. These people were my main base of support."[2] Desperate to right the ship, Yeltsin fired one prime

minister in March of 1998 as the fiasco loomed large, another when it was in full swing that summer, and a third the following spring, just as output indices rebounded.[3] Every dismissal triggered a confrontation with the State Duma, the paramount lower house of the Federal Assembly, over confirming a replacement. In May 1999 Yeltsin narrowly foiled a bill of impeachment in the Duma; a sign of the times was that one of the five counts was for "genocide against the Russian people." The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) air war against Serbia, protested but not averted by Russian diplomacy, struck another nerve. And on Russia's doorstep, the three-year-old truce in the North Caucasus hotspot of Chechnya crumbled amid recrimination, border raids, and abductions. In June 1999, Chechen gunmen, now hoisting the green banner of militant Islam, began infiltrating villages in Dagestan, an adjoining republic of the Russian Federation.

The anxiety quotient rose higher still on August 9, 1999, when Yeltsin axed a fourth prime minister and appointed a little-known Kremlin bureaucrat, Vladimir Putin, as acting premier, subject to ratification by the Duma, which it granted on August 16. To general incredulity, Yeltsin declared he wished Putin to succeed him as president in 2000, calling him "the person who is able to consolidate society and, drawing support from the broadest political forces, ensure the continuation of reforms in Russia."[4] In early September the violence in Chechnya and Dagestan spread into the heartland. Three hundred lives were snuffed out in nighttime terror bombings of apartment houses in Moscow and two southern towns; the Federal Security Service (FSB) claimed to have evidence incriminating pro-Chechen fanatics. Having limited itself to counterinsurgency in Dagestan, the Kremlin now decided to send tanks and tens of thousands of troops barreling into Chechnya to crush the resistance.

Against this ominous backdrop—with a national security emergency, cabinet instability, and burning memories of the 1998 financial crash overshadowing a whiff of economic recovery—Russians on December 19, 1999, voted for representatives to the 450-seat State Duma. They chose half of the members from lists of candidates served up by parties and equivalent organizations (in this volume we often employ "party" as shorthand for all these entities) and half in single-member territorial districts. The doom and gloom notwithstanding, antigovernment groups made no headway. Instead, a majority of the mandates went to lawmakers prepared to cooperate with the executive branch, a gift that had

eluded the president since the election of the first post-Soviet Duma in December 1993. Yeltsin, alternately jubilant and tearful, took to the airwaves on December 31 to announce he was going into retirement six months in advance of schedule and was transferring interim power to Putin. On March 26, 2000, the dark horse who had scraped along at 2 percent in the polls in August was elected to a four-year presidential term.

Why Putin? For Yeltsin, it did not hurt that Putin was a hawk on Chechnya, had shepherded the army operation there, and was willing in a maiden decree as acting president to extend him immunity from criminal prosecution for acts in office.[5] The connection between patron and client ran deeper, however. A career foreign intelligence officer and the director of the FSB before being named premier, Putin was the latest in a string of military and security professionals to gain the favor of the patriarch. Their function in Yeltsin's eyes was to stem the centrifugal and disorderly forces in the governance of Russia that he, wearing the hat of crusader against Soviet tyranny, had earlier done the most to unleash. Revisiting private musings he had had in 1998, and skirting the ironies, Yeltsin says in his memoirs he "had been sensing for some while that the demand was growing in society for imparting a new quality to our state, a steel core, as it were, that would shore up the political structure of government." Needed at the helm was "a thinking, democratic, and innovative person, yet one who was firm in the military manner."[6] After a false start or two, Yeltsin found that metallic core in Putin.[7]

No sooner was the champagne downed at his inauguration on May 7 than President Putin set about nudging Russia's polity toward what his detractors and some of his admirers dubbed a "managed democracy" (*upravlyayemaya demokratiya,* in Russian).[8] From his opening gambit in Chechnya, Putin initiated change in domains as various as federalism, the secret services, the mass media, parliamentary procedures, government-business relations, and the party system. His moves did not always delight pensioner Yeltsin. Towering over all was a chief who fused the "military manner" Yeltsin fancied and the mien of "a manager of the Western type, a manager who calmly, without extra talk, solves problems."[9]

The elections, then, afforded Putin his golden opportunity to pull off a transition within the Russian transition. As Russia continued to make the tumultuous and protracted shift from communist rule to a different political and economic system, leadership of the process changed hands

for the first time since it began, with a subsequent shift in course. Economically, the new leader set a more liberal agenda than his predecessor had: he buttressed private ownership, let capitalists be capitalists by whittling down the government's role, reduced taxes, balanced the budget, and improved the investment climate. Politically, Putin was more illiberal: favoring a more meddlesome, more coercive, and less accountable state, he worked to constrict flows of information and opinion and, when all is said and done, to reduce political competition and freedom. Complicating any Western reaction to these moves, the 1999–2000 elections also dealt Putin carte blanche to overhaul foreign policy, and he used it in ways that the United States and most Euro-Atlantic governments commended. The thaw in relations with Washington after September 11, 2001, would have been much harder to achieve without Putin in the Kremlin.

For Russians, the twin election campaigns in 1999 and 2000 commingled the expected and the unexpected. It was old hat when the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) pocketed the most votes for the Duma, as it had four years before, and 20 million people backed its chairman, Gennadii Zyuganov, for president. Evening after evening from November 19 to December 17, 1999, television screens glowed with familiar faces—Zyuganov, for one, or Grigorii Yavlinskii of the Yabloko party, or Vladimir Zhirinovskii of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)—mouthing well-rehearsed sales pitches. The elections featured a plethora of often-obscure warriors: twenty-six parties (and quasi parties) on the national ballot in December, eleven candidates for president in March. That, too, was a spectacle to which Russians were acclimated, as forty-three parties had vied for the Duma in 1995 and ten politicians for president in 1996. In 155 of the 224 local Duma districts—district 31, in Chechnya, was dormant because of the war—an incumbent stood for reelection.[10]

As eloquent a case could be made that the novel and the unforeseen defined the tenor of the elections. The glut of players was a constant; on the ballot slip, the bulk of the actual names were new. Among the national lists put up for the Duma, there were nineteen newcomers for the seven retreads from the 1995 campaign (the KPRF, Yabloko, the LDPR, and four smaller groups). Ninety-three percent of the single-mandate nominees had not represented districts in the previous Duma. The only survivors from 1996 among the presidential hopefuls were Zyuganov, Yavlinskii, and Zhirinovskii.[11]

The jarring surprise in 1999–2000 was not who was in the fray but who snatched victory. Virtually all pundits were caught unaware. Indicative of the unpreparedness is a sentence in a St. Petersburg political scientist's preview of the Duma campaign in September: "Judging by the initial lineup of candidates, the 1999 campaign does not look to hold any large surprises."[12] The surprises turned out to be large and plentiful.

Anticipation was well nigh unanimous that pro-government candidates would be drubbed and that the centrist bloc assembled by Yurii Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, would challenge the KPRF for primacy in the Duma. Luzhkov's electoral front stitched together the Fatherland movement he founded in 1998 with a grouping known as All Russia, the brainchild of some regional governors. In a crowning moment, he recruited the popular elder statesman Yevgenii Primakov, one of the four prime ministers Yeltsin sacked in 1998–99, to head the Fatherland–All Russia ticket (generally known by its Russian acronym, OVR, for Otechestvo–Vsya Rossiya). With its vague platform and its tentacles in officialdom and in business circles tied to it, OVR bore a more than passing resemblance to Our Home Is Russia (NDR, Nash Dom Rossiya), the party sired in 1995 by then prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. The shoe did not fit in one crucial regard: OVR was anathema to the president and his entourage, who accused Mayor Luzhkov of disloyalty and an indecent haste to shove Yeltsin aside. Being on the outs with the Kremlin did not necessarily dull OVR's luster. It was frequently held to be the trump card that, coupled with its image of competence, would equip OVR to sweep all before it. One article handicapping the forthcoming elections in September heralded Fatherland–All Russia as Russia's "new electoral powerhouse . . . the favorite to gain the largest number of seats in the Duma and to provide the winning presidential candidate in summer 2000." "Primakov's popularity, Fatherland's organization, and the governors' political machines are formidable assets. The bloc is also full of self-proclaimed 'proven managers' who can sell the . . . message that prudence and competence, not youth and economic theory, are the keys to Russian revival."[13] Another writer found the outlook so rosy that "the greatest uncertainty about OVR has to do with the bloc's activity beyond the elections rather than with balloting results."[14] It would have to decide, for instance, with whom to ally to form a controlling majority in the Duma and whether to propose Primakov or Luzhkov for president.

Only as nominations went down to the wire did OVR's nemesis make its debut. The pro-government slate going by the name of Unity was the newest and nimblest of the "parties of power" that have suited up in Russia's political wars since 1993. It was at the outset as much scoffed at as OVR was lionized. A report on business magnate Boris Berezovskii's tour of the Russian hinterland in August, to sound out his contacts on the feasibility of such a bloc, painted it as "one of the more comic episodes of the election season so far." The report was captioned "A Failed Bloc."[15] A respected political analyst and consultant, Igor Bunin of the Center for Political Technologies, predicted in early October, on the heels of Unity's founding congress and its selection of cabinet minister Sergei Shoigu as leader, that it would snag "1–2 percent, a maximum of 3 percent" of the vote.[16] Another article in early October, noting that Unity "violates almost every property of a political party" (true enough), said its one hope for seats in the Duma was to partner with Chernomyrdin's NDR. If it did, the tandem "will not be striving for first place, nor even for second place in the election race: those places are reserved for Fatherland–All Russia and the KPRF."[17] A published essay a month later took notice of a spike in Unity's ratings, only to brush it off as having "no chance of catching up with the current leaders."[18] Ten days before the election Bunin forecast "up to 8 percent" for the bloc, and Andrei Ryabov of the Moscow Carnegie Center 8 or 9 percent.[19] December 19 was to expose these ruminations, too, as wide of the mark.

The ultimate victor in 1999–2000 was, of course, Vladimir Putin, who at the age of forty-eight had never before campaigned for elective office, although he did have experience—severely distasteful to him—in election contests in St. Petersburg.[20] His meteoric rise coincided with the Duma campaign, which the Kremlin team and OVR alike viewed as the Russian version of a U.S. presidential primary. Unknown to all but inveterate Kremlin-watchers until Yeltsin appointed him premier, Putin had been ignored in the crystal ball–gazing about the succession.[21] His promotion in August left intact the suspicion that he was somehow not presidential timber. An American newsletter on Russian politics opined: "Few observers give this low-profile administrator, who once worked as a spy in East Germany, much chance of becoming president. Not only has he never proven himself as a major public figure, but Yeltsin's endorsement is widely seen as a kiss of political death."[22] Curiosity was piqued only in mid-autumn, when polls showed his star to be on the

rapid ascent, mostly, it was felt, because of his handling of the Chechnya imbroglio. On October 11 Putin gave the Chechen leader, Aslan Maskhadov, an ultimatum to lay down arms and hand over fighters wanted by Moscow as terrorists, tacking on the slangy threat, "If need be, we will wipe them [the guerrillas] out in the toilet." Maskhadov balked, and Putin ordered the escalation of the war. "Literally overnight," one correspondent wrote, with some poetic license, "Putin became a serious pretender to the highest post in the state."[23] Putin during the last lap of the campaign voiced his support for the Unity bloc, "personally, as a citizen," after which his proxy surged to relative success in the vote. By year's end he was being treated in the domestic and foreign press—for good reason, our research confirms—as having the grand prize cinched. Putin's triumph in the March election, capping a desultory presidential campaign, has rightly been described as "a foregone conclusion."[24]

In dredging up mistaken prognostications from 1999, we do not mean to imply that we personally were prophets at the time. We were not.[25] Our point is rather that the electoral machinery was in high gear before even connoisseurs diagnosed where the test of wills was heading. The endgame is encapsulated in tables 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3.

Table 1-1 gives the results from the State Duma election by party and by what we call party "family," categorizing Russia's raft of parties and near parties by ideological orientation. We work with a sixfold template: *government* parties (or "parties of power") that start with defense of the status quo; *liberal* parties sworn to uphold, deepen, and humanize the economic and political reforms of the Yeltsin era (often referred to as "right-wing parties"); *centrist* parties that see merit in compromise and avoidance of extremes and passions; *nationalist* (or "patriotic") parties that glorify love of country, nostalgia for empire, and solidarity against internal and external enemies; *socialist* (or "leftist") parties that harken to the Marxist creed of the Soviet regime; and a dusting of *miscellaneous* parties defying classification. The taxonomy is not surgically clean, but there is agreement on where the big players belong.[26]

As can be seen, the socialistic KPRF led the parade in the nationwide popular vote and the districts, as it had in 1995, and lifted its fraction of the national vote by 2 percentage points. The shock was that the upstart government bloc, Unity, and not the centrist but anti-Kremlin OVR, pressed the communists for the lead. Unity's 23.79 percent finish on the party lists was but 1 point behind the KPRF and outshone all other par-

Table 1-1. *Results of Election to the State Duma, December 19, 1999*

		Party-list vote				
Party[a]	*Party family*[b]	*Votes received*[c]	*Percentage of the vote*[c]	*Deputies elected*	*District deputies elected*	*Total deputies elected*
Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF)	Soc	16,196,024	24.78	67	46	113
Unity	Gov	15,549,182	23.79	64	9	73
Fatherland–All Russia (OVR)	Cen	8,886,753	13.59	37	31	68
Union of Right Forces (SPS)	Lib	5,677,247	8.68	24	5	29
Yabloko	Lib	3,955,611	6.05	16	4	20
Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)[d]	Nat	3,990,038	6.10	17	0	17
Our Home Is Russia (NDR)	Gov	790,983	1.21	0	7	7
Communists and Toilers for the Soviet Union	Soc	1,481,890	2.27	0	0	0
Women of Russia	Cen	1,359,042	2.08	0	0	0
Pensioners Party	Mis	1,298,971	1.99	0	1	1
Party for the Defense of Women	Cen	536,022	0.82	0	0	0
Congress of Russian Communities–Boldyrev Movement	Nat	405,298	0.62	0	1	1
Stalinist Bloc for the USSR	Soc	404,274	0.62	0	0	0
Civic Dignity Movement	Lib	402,754	0.62	0	0	0
Movement in Support of the Army	Soc	384,404	0.59	0	2	2
Peace, Labor, May	Mis	383,332	0.59	0	0	0
Nikolayev and Fëdorov Bloc	Cen	371,938	0.57	0	1	1
Peace and Unity Party	Soc	247,041	0.38	0	0	0
Russian People's Union	Nat	245,266	0.38	0	2	2
Russian Socialist Party	Cen	156,709	0.24	0	1	1
Russian Cause	Nat	111,802	0.17	0	0	0
Conservative Movement of Russia	Nat	87,658	0.13	0	0	0
All-Russian Party of the People	Soc	69,695	0.11	0	0	0
Spiritual Heritage	Soc	67,417	0.10	0	1	1
Socialist Party of Russia	Cen	61,689	0.09	0	0	0
Social Democrats	Lib	50,948	0.08	0	0	0
Against all parties	n.a.	2,198,702	3.36	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Independent candidates (in districts)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	105[e]	105[e]

Source: Tsentral'naya izbiratel'naya komissiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii, *Vybory deputatov Gosudarstvennoi Dumy Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1999: elektoral'naya statistika* (The 1999 election of deputies to the State Duma of the Russian Federation: electoral statistics) (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2000), pp. 121–22, 230.

n.a. Not applicable.

a. Here, as is frequently the case in the book, we use the term "party" generically, as shorthand for any organization that put up lists of candidates in the party-list half of the Duma election.

b. Gov = Government, Lib = Liberal, Cen = Centrist, Nat = Nationalist, Soc = Socialist, Mis = Miscellaneous.

c. Omits spoiled ballots. Total valid ballots cast 65,370,690.

d. For procedural reasons, the LDPR was registered in 1999 as the Zhirinovskii Bloc.

e. Does not include eight independents who were chosen in repeat elections in March 2000, in districts where votes against all candidates registered exceeded the votes received by the top candidate, or the independent candidate elected in a special election in Chechnya in August 2000.

ties and blocs, going back to the initiation of multiparty elections in 1993.[27] Shoigu and the Unity roster were at the top of the heap in thirty-two of the federation's eighty-nine regions, eight more than the KPRF had secured. The one sour note was in the districts, where no more than nine nominees of the bloc captured seats, although the Kremlin—independent of Unity—sponsored dozens of successful "independents" in these single-mandate races. Instantly, Unity's seventy-three deputies and the co-option of a tidy sum of the independents elected in the districts made it a blocking minority in the Duma, and before long the hub of a working majority.[28] OVR, meanwhile, languished at 13.59 percent of the popular vote, a half of what had been forecast. Thirty-one deputies in the local districts, second to the KPRF's forty-six, could not offset the shabby performance of the national slate. Defections were to trim OVR's ranks when the Duma convened in January; shortly afterward it opened merger talks with Unity. Three other political organizations cleared the 5 percent threshold for Duma representation. The liberal Yabloko and the nationalist LDPR parties, placing fifth and sixth, had sat in the chamber since 1993.[29] The Union of Right Forces (or SPS), which leapfrogged them to finish fourth, was a bloc melding several extant liberal associations. The lone entrant other than Unity for which Putin signaled sympathy, SPS had been given shaky odds of making the 5 percent cutoff when the campaign opened.[30] An assortment of minor parties, movements, and blocs that straggled well behind 5 percent in the party-list vote elected sixteen delegates in the districts.

Table 1-2 adds longitudinal perspective by tracing the popular vote attained by the six party families through the Duma elections of 1993, 1995, and 1999. One—the pro-government grouping consisting of the Unity bloc and the fast-fading Our Home Is Russia—made a quantum leap from 1995 to 1999, going from one vote in every ten tallied to one in four. The centrists inched up by about 2 percentage points and the miscellaneous parties by a fleck of 1 percent. The other party families sagged: the liberals by 1.40 points, the socialists by 4.00, and the nationalists by an egregious 12.64 points.

The presidential sequel in March (see table 1-3) was anticlimactic. The 53.44 percent vote for Putin absolved him of a runoff, as the law would have required if no one procured a majority in the qualifying round. He cruised in 25 percentage points ahead of Zyuganov and 48 ahead of Yavlinskii. A chastened OVR declined to file nomination papers and, along with SPS, joined the pro-Putin chorus. The Putin vote

Table 1-2. *Percentage of Party-List Vote Obtained by Party Families in the 1993, 1995, and 1999 Duma Elections*[a]

Family	*1993*	*1995*	*1999*
Government	15.51	10.33	25.00
Liberal	18.67	16.83	15.43
Centrist	18.29	14.59	17.40
Nationalist	22.29	20.04	7.40
Socialist	20.39	32.84	28.84
Miscellaneous	0.00	2.54	2.57

a. Families for 1993 and 1995 as given in Timothy J. Colton, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia* (Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 234. Families for 1999 follow table 1-1.

Table 1-3. *Results of Presidential Election, March 26, 2000*

Candidate	*Nominated by*	*Votes received*[a]	*Percentage of the vote*[a]
Vladimir Putin	Independent	39,740,434	53.44
Gennadii Zyuganov	KPRF	21,928,471	29.49
Grigorii Yavlinskii	Yabloko	4,351,452	5.85
Aman Tuleyev	Independent	2,217,361	2.98
Vladimir Zhirinovskii	LDPR	2,026,513	2.72
Konstantin Titov	Independent	1,107,269	1.49
Ella Pamfilova	Civic Dignity Movement	758,966	1.02
Stanislav Govorukhin	Independent	328,723	0.44
Yurii Skuratov	Independent	319,263	0.43
Aleksei Podberëzkin	Spiritual Heritage	98,175	0.13
Umar Dzhabrailov	Independent	78,498	0.11
Against all candidates	n.a.	1,414,648	1.90

Source: Tsentral'naya izbiratel'naya komissiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii, *Vybory prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2000: elektoral'naya statistika* (The 2000 election of the president of the Russian Federation: electoral statistics) (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2000), p. 191.

n.a. Not applicable.

a. Omits spoiled ballots. Total valid ballots cast 74,369,773.

was two and one-half times Unity's in December. It was 19 percentage points higher than Yeltsin's in the first round in 1996 and 1 point shy of Yeltsin's numbers in the two-man runoff in 1996. The cakewalk bears comparison with Russia's presidential election in the last year of Soviet power, 1991, when Yeltsin's popularity was at its zenith. The 57.20 percent Yeltsin attained that year in a field of six was not much above Putin's haul in a field of ten.

As with any historical occurrence, remote or proximate in time, it is tempting in hindsight to see the trajectory of the 1999–2000 elections as inevitable. Many Russians nowadays do exactly that. They are aware that an underpinning of Putin's managed democracy is the axiom that in

the cruel world of the twenty-first century a depleted Russia has little scope for maneuver, so the gist of leadership is unsentimental adaptation to circumstances. The notion has two corollaries: realists forged, like Putin, in the crucible of government administration know best how to adapt; and a vital mission of these stewards of the state is to prevent actors who are not state based or who are the leaders of subnational governments from standing in the way of national salvation. Russian intellectuals, even when they find fault with the reasoning, sometimes accept aspects of it and project them backward to say that the elections in which Putin conquered power were an empty formality—and that no one should care which personality or clan carried the day. Boris Kagarlitsky, a gadfly researcher and columnist of a social-democratic bent, put the thesis provocatively in 2002:

> The very concept of a political alternative has disappeared during the past three years. The opposition at least made a show of battling with Yeltsin. Today the opposition doesn't hide the fact that the battle is only for second place. It makes no claim to an independent political role. . . . In the Yeltsin era, the public still believed that it elected the president. But in 1999–2000 this belief was revealed to be an illusion. The president arises in the bowels of the bureaucracy, the product of its secret laws. Elections have become nothing more than a gala before the inauguration. Talk about a changing of the guard now resembles discussions of climate change. The political elite are like bad weather; you can curse them all you like but you won't change a thing. If you don't like the climate or the government, move to another country.[31]

We share Kagarlitsky's concern about the sapping of democratic norms and practices under Putin, as outlined in chapter 8, but not his interpretation of recent history. If Russia and its rulers never changed, the hammer and sickle would still be flying over Moscow, Kiev, and Tashkent, and the likes of Kagarlitsky, a student dissident in the 1980s, would not be reading their words in the newspaper. Nor, in our view, can the elections that bridged the Yeltsin and Putin eras be written off as a hollow pretense or costume ball. The battle over power, position, and policy was real and suspenseful, as few eyewitnesses will fail to remember.

Any election in a democratic or semidemocratic setting is at once a contest at the level of the political elite and an act of choice by individ-

ual citizens at the level of the masses. Journalistic accounts of elections typically emphasize the former dimension and have a qualitative flavor. At their best in conveying the human drama and excitement of the campaign, they relate the stirring of political ambition, the forging of alliances, the articulation and dissemination of a political message, the cut-and-thrust with adversaries, and the like.[32] Scholarly accounts typically zero in on voting choice and are quantitative in method. They isolate and weigh influences on election-day decisions by sifting through sample surveys of the electorate and using the data to verify theories of political behavior.[33]

The present volume integrates these two methods of analysis. We devote real attention to analyzing qualitatively the *elections* per se. We offer a narrative that relays the motivations, calculations, and strategic choices of the elite-echelon actors in the drama. This strand of *Popular Choice and Managed Democracy* relies on print and Internet sources, on interviews with politicians and campaign personnel, and on personal observation of the electoral process.

At the same time, we rely on quantitative data to delve rigorously into microfoundations. Rank-and-file *voters* behind the curtains of the polling booth rendered the final verdict in the elections. To determine how their decisions were shaped, we and our Russian collaborators committed heavily to survey research (see appendix A for details). In the argot of the field, we did panel surveys; that is, we interviewed and reinterviewed the same respondents, shooting a crude motion picture of popular attitudes rather than a still photo. Our principal tool was a three-wave interrogation of nearly two thousand randomly chosen citizens between the autumn of 1999 and the spring of 2000. To uncover trends in the electorate, we did a follow-up interview in 2000 of surviving members of a preexisting panel, established to look into the national elections of 1995–96 and dormant since then.

We have constructed a multistage statistical model to decipher the 1999–2000 survey data (see appendix B for a rundown). The logit regressions in it sequentially incorporate indicators of voters' social characteristics, perceptions of national conditions, normative beliefs, partisanship, and assessments of incumbents, leadership character, and likely performance in power on issues such as Chechnya and economic revival. Numerical "total effects" estimate the effects of given variables on the vote, making allowance for other explanatory variables causally antecedent to or coeval with them, and computer simulations generate

other quantities of interest. We keep the statistical model on the back burner, for our main goal is to explain the dynamics of the electoral fight as a whole and not to retrace exhaustively the behavior of individual voters. We further streamline the modeling and the narrative by going lightly on contestants who did not make a minimally respectable showing, for which our floor is 5 percent of the valid votes cast. Accordingly, we bear down in the Duma election on the KPRF, Unity, OVR, SPS, and Yabloko; for the most part, we skip over the LDPR, as an economizing measure and because it looked like a waning force at the end of this electoral cycle.[34] For the presidential election, we concentrate on Putin, Zyuganov, and Yavlinskii.

Our combined qualitative and quantitative analysis demonstrates that the best were much more proficient than the rest at operating in a transitional environment still distinguished by pervasive uncertainty and by underinstitutionalization, manifested here in the immaturity and partial reach of political parties. The Unity bloc and Vladimir Putin had formidable political arsenals and wielded their weapons in cutthroat, if not undemocratic, fashion. And yet, as of the kickoff of the Duma race, it was another participant also moored in the matrix of state organization, OVR, that was said to be the "powerhouse" with "formidable assets" up its sleeve, and it should not be forgotten that the precursors to Unity had wasted a not dissimilar bounty in earlier Russian elections. The communists and the liberals maintained an electoral market share by wooing well-defined social groups, piggybacking on discontent or contentment with current economic conditions, fostering affective ties, and catering to issue opinions. But the aggressive forces in 1999 and 2000 were those that, while doing some of these same things, also manipulated and mobilized the populace's short-term evaluations of the political actors: of the job done by current officeholders, of individual leaders' personal virtues, and of worthiness to handle the nation's pressing problems.

For the task of guiding voter attitudes toward the players, command over *the central apparatus of the state* was the pivotal resource. It had intrinsic value and could be leveraged to fetch other benefits—provided it was deployed effectively and enterprisingly, which it had not always been in the past. Unity, the hurriedly assembled and ideology-free party of power whose founders knew enough to hire skilled public relations experts, and Putin, lieutenant and then successor to Yeltsin and no less of a tyro at elections, utilized the resource brilliantly. OVR, a kind of

wanna-be party of power captained by aging Moscow officials and risk-averse regional bosses, was unable to match Unity's energy or to counterpunch when attacked. Its humiliation and the withdrawal from presidential contention of the head of its Duma list, Primakov, left Putin with unimpeded passage to his goal. He proceeded remorselessly down that path.

Chapter 2 of our book sets the scene for the elections by reviewing the transition milieu in which they were waged, paying attention to electoral rules, the cast of players, and the mindset of the electorate, as displayed in attitudes and continuity/discontinuity in behavior. Chapters 3 through 7 form the core of the book. Each is organized around a particular electoral player or set of players, their objectives and strategies, their efforts to rally mass support, and the reasons for their ability or inability to entice voters, as revealed by our survey data. Chapter 3 presents a detailed account of the Unity bloc's breakthrough. Chapter 4 focuses on the hubristic Fatherland–All Russia, which was expected to coast to victory but fell by the wayside. Chapters 5 and 6 spotlight the communists and the liberals, opposites in ideology but akin in having a past that stood in the way of expanding their constituency, and contain compact sections on the Zyuganov and Yavlinskii presidential campaigns. Chapter 7 returns to the winners' circle, taking up the selling of manager-in-chief Putin, a saga intertwined with Unity's in some ways but separable from it in others. Chapter 8 recaps our findings and sketches implications for Russian politics and Russia's place in the world.