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The Russian Elite under Putin: Militocratic or Bourgeois?

Sharon Werning Rivera and David W. Rivera¹

Abstract: Since Vladimir Putin took over the presidency, analysts have highlighted the large numbers of *siloviki*—those with experience in the military and security agencies—who have been recruited into government service. Two political scientists investigate this trend by reexamining previously published findings and using an original data set. Claims of the “FSB-ization of power” under Putin and an underappreciated trend in elite formation under Putin—the increasing presence of business representatives in the government and society at large—are considered. The article examines the implications of its findings for Russia’s future political development, particularly in terms of stability and democracy.

In the decade following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a vigorous debate arose about the composition of the Yel'tsin-era political elite. That discussion revolved around the question of whether the old Soviet *nomenklatura* had remained in power, or whether the political revolution of the early 1990s had also brought in its wake a social revolution in the elite stratum. One school of thought emphasized a high degree of elite reproduction in early post-Communist Russia (Hanley, Yershova, and Anderson, 1995; Kryshtanovskaya and White, 1996). Another set of studies contended that the post-Communist elite had undergone significant turnover since the end of the Soviet period (Ashin, 1993; Lane and Ross, 1998;

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Rigby, 1999; Rivera, 2000). At the same time, scholars also debated whether the possession of a high-ranking political position during the Soviet period was beneficial in accumulating economic wealth in post-Communist Russia (Böröcz and Róna-Tas, 1995).

With the accession of Vladimir Putin to the presidency, the composition of the political elite has once again become the focus of much interest. In particular, analysts have identified two trends. The first of these trends—which has been widely discussed—is the influx of personnel with military and security backgrounds into governmental positions at all levels. Collectively termed the *siloviki*—i.e., individuals with backgrounds in roughly a dozen “power ministries,” such as the Federal Security Service (FSB), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), and Ministry of Defense—these individuals are widely assumed to exert substantial influence on contemporary Russian policymaking. The second trend—one that has attracted much less attention—is the increasing representation of business representatives in all sectors of the Russian elite.

This article investigates these twin developments on the basis of both a reexamination of previously published findings and an original data set. It contends that while the effects of an increasing *siloviki* presence in Russian political life might well be as detrimental as most assume, the number of *siloviki* in important positions has not been as large as previously maintained. Specifically, both our recalculation of the data from the key research paper on this topic as well as our examination of new data lead to the conclusion that claims of an emerging “militocracy” are real but overstated. In addition, both data sources confirm the existence of an increasing business presence in the Russian elite. Finally, the article examines the implications of its findings for Russia’s future political development.

THE GROWING MILITARIZATION OF RUSSIAN POLITICS

Since Putin assumed the presidency of the Russian Federation on New Year’s Day 2000, numerous analysts have highlighted the growing influence of the *siloviki* on Russian politics. For instance, the author of an article in *Novaya gazeta* warns that “the ‘chekist’ clan from St. Petersburg, having all the signs of a domestic junta, numbers up to 6,000 representatives, occupying various governmental, public, and commercial posts” (“Uzhe boleye,” 2003). In the most comprehensive study of Putin-era elites to date—which its authors entitled “Putin’s Militocracy”—Olga Krysh-tanovskaya and Stephen White report that military-security representatives increased from 11.2 percent of the Russian elite in 1993 under Yel’tsin to 25.1 percent in 2002 under Putin. “If it was only a few generals who had moved into politics,” they conclude, “there would be no reason to attach a larger significance to their recruitment. But what has been taking place is not a small number of individual movements, but a wholesale migration that now accounts for 15 to 70 percent of the membership of a variety of

elite groups" (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2003, pp. 293, 303). Since the publication of Kryshtanovskaya and White's seminal article, their finding that one-quarter of the current Russian elite hails from the ranks of the KGB or military has been repeatedly cited by both scholars and journalists.²

Scholars have also highlighted Putin's early reforms of Russia's federal system in 2000 as a prime example of the militarization of political life. As part of these reforms, Putin added a new administrative layer to the federal system that consisted of seven new and larger federal districts designed to increase central control over the 89 subjects of the federation. Putin also overhauled the Yel'tsin-era system of presidential representatives and appointed new presidential envoys to oversee those districts (Alexander, 2004).³ According to Kryshtanovskaya and White (2003, p. 300), five of the seven presidential envoys were generals and 70 percent of their deputies "were senior officers in the military or security services."⁴ In a similar study of the backgrounds of personnel in the presidential envoys' offices, an expert on the Russian military concludes that "the degree to which power ministry officials dominate federal district structures is striking" (Taylor, 2002).

What impact might this influx of *siloviki* into positions of political power have on government policy? One thing that might be expected from a militarized Kremlin is a militaristic foreign policy, especially on the territory of the former USSR. In this regard, in the 1990s Russia's military leadership adopted a view of the world that sees geopolitical competition as fierce and the West as inherently hostile to Russian interests (Jackson, 2002). Moreover, as William Jackson (2002, p. 381) observes, "Military commentary has also regularly depicted the United States and NATO as embarked on a strategy of actively promoting conflicts in the CIS with a view to supplanting Russian influence in the region and destabilizing Russia itself." Notwithstanding this alarming development, however, few analysts have expressed the expectation that a Kremlin dominated by *siloviki* will behave more aggressively in the international arena or observed any actual increase in the use of force by Moscow. And indeed, Russian foreign policy during Putin's first term in office was characterized by both the pursuit of strategic cooperation with the West and the continuation of the largely pacific, non-imperialist policies pursued during Boris Yel'tsin's years in office (Rivera, 2003).

In contrast, many analysts have drawn a clear link between the infiltration of the Russian government by the *siloviki* and the deepening authoritarianism that has been under way in Russia since Putin's rise to power.⁵ For instance, Gennadiy Zyuganov, the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, warns that the large number of bureaucrats and

²For examples, see Reddaway et al. (2004, p. 2), and Bellaby (*Associated Press*, March 5, 2004), who refers to "Putin's men" as "the former spies and military officers who swept in on his coattails more than four years ago and hold a quarter of the nation's top political jobs."

³On federalism in general under Putin, see also Hahn (2003).

⁴See also Petrov (2005) for a discussion of *siloviki* in Russia's regions.

military-security officers in the pro-presidential party, Unified Russia, means that it is “not a political bloc, but a kind of commandant’s office that smells of a police state” (*RFE/RL Newslines*, December 8, 2003). Krysh-tanovskaya and White (2003, pp. 303–304) similarly refer to the polity under Putin as a “well-ordered police state” and add that “a change in quantity must necessarily lead to a change in quality.... The more it becomes a militocracy, the more post-Communist Russian politics will take on the characteristics of the wholly formal democracy of the Soviet period.” Likewise, Victor Yasmann (2004) argues that “the enhanced role of former KGB and other secret-service veterans in Russia has given impetus to a real process of cultural counterrevolution in Russian society, in reaction against the liberal values of the 1990s reforms, and in an attempt to return to Soviet traditions and norms.” He further predicts that “domestic policy will continue to be transformed into little more than a series of special operations.” Finally, a long-time observer of the Russian military expresses the view that “[v]irtually all of Putin’s major initiatives for reform of Russia’s state structure have been designed in line with the theory that the best way to govern a country such as Russia is by means of a strictly hierarchical, military-style command system” (Golts and Putnam, 2004, p. 150).

Other analysts, however, have disputed such assessments of the implications of elite militarization for contemporary Russian politics. For instance, Ball and Gerber (1996, p. 163) argue that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, “Russian [military] officers support the basic tenets of democracy.” In particular, their survey of 600 field-grade officers conducted in 1995 finds that

[L]arge majorities support the rights of citizens to reside where they wish and travel abroad, the freedom of both citizens and the press to criticize the government, and the rights of citizens to join social organizations. When asked whether the rights of an individual accused of a crime or those of society should have priority, officers come down on the side of individual rights (47.8 percent), or neutrality (33.0 percent). Only 14 percent of the officers advocate a Soviet-type political system for Russia.

“In the face of these results,” they conclude, “it is impossible to maintain that the Russian officer corps is mostly authoritarian or enamored with Soviet ideology” (Ball and Gerber, 1996, p. 165).

Still other scholars have emphasized that the *siloviki* are not the only elite group with access to Putin. For instance, Aleksey Makarkin contends that when people speak of the “Petersburgers” who exert influence on Putin, they usually mean those who worked in the Leningrad branch of the KGB with Putin, and less often, those liberal intellectuals who worked

⁵For discussions of the degradation of democracy under Putin, see the country report on Russia published by Freedom House in Piano and Puddington (2005, pp. 519–524) and Fish (2005, ch. 3).

in the mayor's office and now hold key positions in the government dealing with macroeconomic policy. Yet there is another category of elites who "worked neither in the KGB nor in the mayoral administration but were well-acquainted with the future president even in the 1990s and who currently occupy various significant posts in Moscow and St. Petersburg" (Makarkin, 2003). Likewise, Nikolai Petrov and Darrell Slider (2003, p. 219) identify four sources of elite recruitment from St. Petersburg into the Putin administration: "former colleagues from the Leningrad–St. Petersburg FSB ... lawyers and former colleagues from Mayor Anatolii Sobchak's administration, liberal economists, and so-called 'unallied individuals.'"

Nevertheless, those concerned about the rise of the *siloviki* can point to a significant body of evidence supporting their pessimistic assumptions. For instance, a survey of 615 military officers conducted in 1994 found that 64 percent agreed with the statement, "Western-style democracy is not appropriate for the peoples of Russia: it leads only to corruption and disorder." In addition, 62 percent agreed that a "strong hand" and authoritarian rule" were needed for Russia to overcome its "current chaos"; only 31 percent disagreed with that proposition (SINUS Moskva, 1994, pp. 12 and 26). In contrast, analogous surveys found that a mere 16 percent of civilian foreign policy elites in 1993 and 28 percent in 1996 favored either "dictatorship" or "strong authoritarian rule" for the same purpose (SINUS Moskva and VTsIOM, 1996, Figure 17). Moreover, the gap between civilians and the military might have widened in subsequent years. On the basis of a three-wave survey of foreign policy elites, Zimmerman (2002, p. 165) reports that "[i]n 1993 and 1995 elite respondents in the armed forces were only modestly less prone to support market democracy than were their civilian counterparts. ... In 1999, by contrast, those interviewed from the military were strikingly less supportive of market democracy than were civilian foreign policy elites."

Finally, we should not overlook the evidence provided by the most influential *silovik* of them all, former KGB Lieutenant Colonel Putin. As president, Putin has not only presided over the degradation of Russian democracy; he has also at times revealed his personal ambivalence toward the democratic achievements of the 1990s. For instance, in response to a question from an American reporter about the status of democracy in Russia, he candidly replied, "If by democracy, one means the dissolution of the state, then we do not need such democracy. Why is democracy needed? To make people's lives better, to make them free. I don't think there are people in the world who want democracy that could lead to chaos" (as quoted by Baker and Glasser in *The Washington Post*, September 26, 2003).⁶ The former lieutenant colonel's socialization into the culture of the agency in which he was employed for close to two decades is undoubtedly part of

⁶As the authors point out, this response was deleted from the official Kremlin transcript of the interview (Putin, 2003). Putin (2005) made similar remarks a year and a half later during a press conference with George W. Bush.

the explanation of his views on this score. As Dale Herspring (2003, pp. 4–5) comments, Putin “spent his career in the state apparatus, within an agency tasked with being the sword and shield of the regime. He comes to problem solving with a bias toward governmental actions and a notion of society as subservient to the interests of the state.”

A RISING BUSINESS ELITE

Although the influx of *siloviki* into the governing elite has received substantial attention, there is another important trend in Russian elite formation under Putin that deserves greater notice than it has received: the expanding incorporation of individuals from the private sector into the top echelons of power. Kryshstanovskaya and White (2003, Table 1) report that “business representatives” increased their presence in the elite from 1.6 percent in 1993 to 11.3 percent in 2002. Other data of theirs show that in 2001, “the placement of big business commanded 17 percent of seats in the State Duma as well as 16 percent of positions with the presidential staff, 8 percent of governorships, and 4 percent of the membership of the Cabinet of Ministers” (Kryshstanovskaya and White, 2002, pp. 235–236). Finally, their more recent study of Russian business elites produces data on “the proportion of key decision-making positions that are held by individuals from the world of big business” among Russia’s “top leadership,” Duma deputies, government, and regional elite, in 1993, 2001, and 2003. The authors find that “in almost every category the proportion of business representatives has increased and across all categories the representation of business more than trebled, reaching a remarkable 20 percent of government ministers” (Kryshstanovskaya and White, 2005, p. 302).

This trend is confirmed in other works, such as in a study of regional elites conducted by the Institute for Situational Analysis and New Technologies in 2003. According to a summary of that study published in *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 1702 experts in 66 of Russia’s regions identified the most influential individuals in both politics and economics in those regions. The results indicate that individuals with business backgrounds increased as a percentage of regional elites from 1.6 percent in 1993 to 11.3 percent in 2003 (which, the study notes, was a higher rate of increase than that enjoyed by *siloviki*) (Dobrynina in *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, March 17, 2004). In addition, the 2003 parliamentary elections filled approximately one-third of the seats of the State Duma with persons having connections to “state-connected big business.” Of 444 deputies, 59 are “[o]fficials of state enterprises, the natural monopolies, and the recently Kremlin-tamed oligarchic financial-industrial groups” and 92 are “declared holders of stock in such enterprises” (Hahn, 2004).

As William Tompson writes (2005, p. 166), “Perhaps the defining feature of the relationship between business—particularly big business—and the state in Russia is the extent to which the two have inter-penetrated each other.” From the point of view of the oligarchs, their “fortunes have always depended on state patronage, and the state’s attitude towards them

remains critical to their survival. That is why they work so diligently to 'colonize' state structures" (Tompson, 2005, pp. 163–164). At the same time, the state has encouraged this inter-penetration. According to Eugene Huskey (2005, p. 174), "The distinguishing feature of patronage practice in the Russian bureaucracy under Putin is ... the revival of a recruitment tool from the Soviet era—the cadres reserve," or lists that "contain the names of individuals who have been 'pre-qualified' to assume responsible positions in the bureaucracy." "In Russia," Huskey contends, "not only does the state include private sector personnel on some of its reserve lists for government posts, it has also begun to claim the right to form reserve lists for certain private organizations, whether in the business or non-profit sectors" (Huskey, 2005, p. 176).

So what impact might the enlarged presence of business representatives in the elite have on contemporary Russian politics? It is certainly the case that historical experience is mixed regarding the role played by the bourgeoisie in the emergence of modern democracies (Moore, 1966; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992). However, it also seems likely that many of the new business elites in Russia—those who have become adept at functioning in a market economy—represent a qualitatively different sort of group than the cadres of former military-security personnel discussed above. This may be particularly true of a younger generation of wealthy business elites. According to Natal'ya Tikhonova, Deputy Director of the Institute for Comprehensive Social Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, "In recent years, a 'young' elite has formed, whose members did not take part in the initial round of privatization at the start of the 1990s." This new generation of millionaires (aged 40–45 on average), Tikhonova asserts, has two priorities—family and freedom—with the latter understood as "the opportunity 'to be your own boss'" (as quoted by Sobolevskaya in *RIA Novosti-Gruziya*, June 16, 2004). The distinctiveness of managers of new private businesses—"firms created after 1989 that have never had any state ownership"—is also supported by Timothy Frye, who finds that they "are an important constituency for the creation of both market economies and democratic politics" (Frye, 2003, p. 25). Thus, the rise of an entrepreneurial class into the corridors of power has the potential to advance the cause of democracy in Russia and offset the parallel rise of the *siloviki*.

For additional insight into the question of what such a trend might mean for Russia, we turn to the work of classical elite theorist Gaetano Mosca. Mosca contends that in a changing social environment, the talents and services needed by society must be reflected in the governing elite; if the ruling elite fails to adapt to new conditions, its power will decline. He writes:

If a new source of wealth develops in a society, if the practical importance of knowledge grows, if an old religion declines or a new one is born, if a new current of ideas spreads, then, simultaneously, far-reaching dislocations occur in the ruling class....

Ruling classes decline inevitably when they cease to find scope for the capacities through which they rose to power, when they can no longer render the social services which they once rendered, or when their talents and the services they render lose in importance in the social environment in which they live (Mosca, 1939, pp. 65–66).

Mosca distinguishes between two strata within the elite: a group of individuals holding actual leadership positions, and a group of aspiring leaders that is the source of recruitment into the higher stratum. “Below the highest stratum in the ruling class there is always ... another that is much more numerous and comprises all the capacities for leadership in the country” (Mosca, 1939, p. 404). As society changes, the ruling class may absorb representatives of the new and emerging social forces into its ranks—particularly into the lower stratum—which has a prophylactic effect on the health of the regime. In his view, “there is only one way to avoid what is called the death of a state or a nation. ... That way is to provide for a slow but continuous modification of ruling classes, for a slow but continuous assimilation by them of new elements of moral cohesion that will gradually supplant the old” (Mosca, 1939, p. 462). In other words, for Mosca, regime stability depends crucially on continuous elite adaptation and, in particular, on the gradual incorporation of rising societal groups—such as the Russian business community—into the elite.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Our analyses of the composition of the early Putin elite are based on two sources: (1) existing data reported by Kryshtanovskaya and White (2003); and (2) an original data base compiled from a series of yearly directories entitled *Federal'naya i regional'naya elita Rossii: Kto est' Kto v politike i ekonomike. Yezhegodniy biograficheskiy spravochnik* (The federal and regional elite of Russia. Who is Who in politics and the economy. An annual biographical directory) (Mukhin, 2001, 2002, 2004). These directories are published by an independent research center, the Center for Political Information (CPI), which has published analyses of Russia's regions, political elites, and business leaders, among other subjects.⁷ A Russian specialist on elites at the Carnegie Moscow Center recommended the products of the CPI for use in this project.⁸

There are three generally accepted approaches to identifying elites in a given society. The most widely used method for determining elite membership is positional analysis. When utilizing this method, scholars “assume that the formal institutions of government provide a useful map of power relations, and thus that incumbents of high positions in those institutions are likely to be politically powerful” (Putnam, 1976, p. 15). This

⁷Information about the center is available on its website, located at www.spic-centre.ru.

⁸Personal communication with Aleksey Titkov (via e-mail, 2003).

approach considers members of the elite to be those who occupy clearly defined, high-level positions in formal institutions. The second method, reputational analysis, “relies, not on formal organization charts, but on informal reputations for power” (Putnam, 1976, p. 16). It is of particular use when powerful figures do not hold high-ranking formal positions but nevertheless exert important influence on decisions or outcomes. Finally, scholars can use decisional analysis, which is the identification of powerful individuals by “studying how specific decisions are reached and, in particular, by noting who successfully initiates or vetoes proposals” (Putnam, 1976, p. 17).⁹ Decisional analysis is difficult to undertake, and it is therefore less frequently used in elite studies.

Although the precise methodology for selecting individuals for inclusion in the CPI directories is not revealed, it appears that a combination of these three methods (positional, reputational, and decisional) was employed. The editor of the directories states that the main criterion for including an individual is that he or she “changed or facilitated change in the political and economic processes of Russia during the given period” (Mukhin, 2002, p. 3). Thus, the 2002 directory includes “the biographies of individuals who, in the opinion of the editor, were prominent members of Russian society in the period 1990–2002” and who “continue to be well-known in 2002.” In total, 1055 individuals are identified for 2002.

These individuals thus represent a somewhat different pool of elites than those on which the claims of a growing “militocracy” are primarily based. Kryshtanovskaya and White’s 2003 elite cohort consists of 786 individuals, who were selected exclusively by means of a positional approach. Specifically, their elites consist of persons from the following five sectors: (1) the 24 members of the Security Council of 2003, which they term the “national leadership”; (2) “58 members of the Russian government of 2003”; (3) regional elites, consisting of 88 heads of the subjects of the Russian Federation (Chechnya is omitted); (4) “the 168 members of the Federation Council,” the upper house of the Russian parliament; and (5) the 448 deputies of the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, as elected in December 1999 (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2003, Table 2).

In contrast, our data base is more comprehensive, and also includes most of the key members of the federal government and the two houses of the Federal Assembly. This was ascertained by comparing the 2001 CPI directory with another directory compiled by a different independent analytical center for that same year. The latter volume, *Rossiyskaya vlast' v litsakh: Biograficheskiy spravochnik* (The faces of the Russian leadership: a biographical directory) includes 109 leading individuals from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of power—figures such as the president, the prime minister and his deputies, federal ministers, committee chairs and leaders in both houses of the Federal Assembly, heads of leading judicial organs, and high-ranking figures in the presidential administration

⁹For a discussion of the use of all three methods in the Russian context, see Rivera (1995).

(Kozhevnikova and Mikheyevskii, 2001, p. 1). Nearly three-quarters of these individuals were also included in the 2001 edition of the CPI directory. Thus, our data base includes most individuals in the top echelons of power that would be identified on the basis of positional analysis alone.

This study focuses on the demographics of the Putin-era elite, concentrating on age, education, and occupational background. Of course, one might object that the mere numerical balance of forces in the Russian elite is at best an incomplete predictor of the long-term prospects for Russian democracy and/or political stability; rather, many factors—quite apart from elite composition—are at play. One might further argue that even when elites are the main focus, other nuances of the various elite sectors will be consequential—such as what role each group actually plays in setting government policy, whether a given sector is cowed or confident, and which group has permeated the highest circle of power as opposed to the lower echelons. We agree with all of these caveats, yet—like Kryshstanovskaya and White and numerous others working on this subject—we also feel that the numerical strength of various socio-economic groups in the Russian elite will be consequential for the future evolution of the Russian polity.

“THE FSB-IZATION OF POWER”: REAL BUT OVERSTATED

In contemporary Russia, elite turnover seems to have brought qualitatively new people to the forefront. As Kryshstanovskaya and White (2003, Table 1) contend, the elites in place in 2003 under Putin were more likely to have a military or security background than were their counterparts under Yel'tsin a decade earlier. Specifically, they state that 26.6 percent of Putin-era political elites had received a “military education,” compared with 6.7 percent of the Yel'tsin elite in place in 1993. They also report the following percentages of “military-security representatives” in each of the five elite sectors that they analyze: 58.3 percent of the national leadership, 32.8 percent of the government, 10.2 percent of the regional elite, 14.9 percent of the upper house of parliament, and 9.4 percent of the lower house. Kryshstanovskaya and White then average these figures together to produce an aggregate “average by cohort” for 2003 of 25.1 percent—by which they mean that 25.1 percent of all Putin-era elites had a military or security background (Kryshstanovskaya and White, 2003, Table 2). After presenting equivalent data for 1988, 1993, and 1999, they conclude: “connection to the military became an increasingly prominent characteristic of the political elite from the late Soviet period. Between the years of *perestroika* and the middle of Putin’s first presidential term, the overall share of military personnel increased almost sevenfold.... After Putin’s election in 2000 they began to move into economic and political life in unprecedented numbers” (Kryshstanovskaya and White, 2003, p. 292).

One slightly troubling aspect of Kryshstanovskaya and White's analyses is that they do not divulge how "military-security representatives" were either defined or coded. Somewhat more problematic is that they do not provide any theoretical justification for creating a summary indicator for each cohort by averaging together the percentages in their five elite sectors. As Munck and Verkuilen (2002, pp. 22–25) argue, the aggregation of the components of a larger concept should always be grounded in an explicit theory of their relationship to the concept in question; aggregation in the absence of such a theory invites significant measurement error. This concern is very relevant here since in their "average by cohort," Kryshstanovskaya and White average together the scores of groups of very different sizes as if they were equivalent in either size or significance. In particular, the percentage of *siloviki* in Russia's national leadership (which, to repeat, is defined as the 24 members of the Security Council) is averaged together with their percentage in the lower house of parliament (which possessed 448 members). As a result, a member of the Security Council carries 18.7 times the weight of a Duma deputy in the overall "average by cohort." Such a summary statistic will produce distorted values if any of the very large or very small elite sectors possess extreme scores. Unfortunately, this is the case with regard to Kryshstanovskaya and White's data for 2003: the Security Council constitutes the smallest elite sector and (unsurprisingly) has the largest proportion of *siloviki* (58.3 percent); and the lower house of parliament constitutes the largest elite sector and has the smallest share of former military-security personnel (9.4 percent).

An alternative summary statistic that avoids such distortions and thus should provide a more accurate depiction of the overall percentage of *siloviki* in the elite in a given cohort can be computed as follows: (1) summing the number of military-security representatives across all five elite sectors; (2) summing the total number of individuals in the given elite cohort; and (3) dividing the former figure by the latter figure to compute the percentage of military representation in the elite cohort as a whole. While Kryshstanovskaya and White do not provide the first set of figures, the relevant numbers can be easily calculated from the information they do provide.¹⁰ Such a computation for the Putin cohort of 2003 yields a total of 109 *siloviki* out of 786 individuals, which equals 13.9 percent, or close to half of the 25.1 percent originally reported. In other words, according to our recalculation of Kryshstanovskaya and White's data, less than one-seventh of the 2003 Russian elite was recruited from the "power ministries," not one-quarter, as those authors report in their widely cited article.

In the third column of Table 1, we report the analogous computations for Kryshstanovskaya and White's three other elite cohorts from the Gorbachev and Yel'tsin years. These recalculations show that Kryshstanovskaya

¹⁰ Specifically, the national leadership in 2003 included 58.3 percent of 24, or 14 *siloviki*; the government included 32.8 percent of 58, or 19; the regional elite included 10.2 percent of 88, or 9; the upper house of parliament included 14.9 percent of 168, or 25; and the lower house of parliament included 9.4 percent of 448, or 42.

Table 1. Recalculations of Kryshtanovskaya and White Data on Military-Security Representation in the Russian Elite^a

Cohort	Original method	Recalculation
1988 (Gorbachev)	3.7 percent	4.4 percent
1993 (Yel'tsin)	11.2	5.7
1999 (Yel'tsin)	17.4	9.3
2003 (Putin)	25.1	13.9

^aSource: Kryshtanovskaya and White (2003, Table 2).

and White's central finding is valid but significantly overstated: the presence of *siloviki* in the Russian elite has increased monotonically since *perestroika* and has reached new heights under Putin, but it has increased threefold since 1988—not the sevenfold reported in their article. Moreover, according to these data, the influx of military personnel under Putin is considerable but does not warrant being described as “unprecedented.” For instance, when Yevgeniy Primakov was appointed as prime minister in September 1998, he too began filling government positions with former colleagues from the intelligence services (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1999, pp. 132–133). As a result, the representation of *siloviki* in the elite increased by 3.6 percentage points (from 5.7 percent to 9.3 percent between 1993 and 1999), a figure that is close to the 4.6 percentage point increase (i.e., from 9.3 percent to 13.9 percent) that took place between 1999 and 2003. In this regard, even before Putin came to power, Eugene Huskey expressed the view that the appointment of Nikolay Bordyuzha as head of the presidential administration in December 1998 “seemed to mark what might be called a militarization of the presidency, with experience in the armed forces or security services increasingly common among the leadership of the presidential apparatus” (Huskey, 1999, p. 96).

LESS MILITOCRATIC, MORE BOURGEOIS

But what patterns emerge when the “microscope” is shifted from political elites toward a broader group of societal actors—those who exert significant and enduring influence in many different sectors of Russian society? To answer this question, we used our original data base (described in the methodology section above) to analyze the demographic characteristics of what we call “2002 societal elites.”

Our first finding is that the presence of individuals from the military-security apparatus during Putin's first term in office is lower than either Kryshtanovskaya and White's figures or our recalculation of their data suggests. To arrive at this conclusion, we examined the professional backgrounds of elites in the 2002 CPI directory. We first selected four years to

represent different political generations—the Brezhnev, Gorbachev, Yel'tsin, and Putin eras—and to make our data set roughly comparable to that of Kryshtanovskaya and White (2003). We then coded the jobs that these individuals held in the selected years (1976, 1986, 1996, and 2001). In addition, we coded the jobs that they held immediately prior to the ones held in those four years.

Our initial coding produced a list of 170 jobs that we then grouped into five general categories and 15 subcategories, all of which are listed in Table 2. For example, an activist working for the political party Yabloko (if he or she did not simultaneously hold a post in the State Duma or other body) was coded as engaging in “Non-Governmental Political Work” in the Parties and Civic Groups category. In the broader category of Culture/Media/Professional, the sub-category “White-Collar Professionals” comprises scientists, teachers, research associates, doctors, lawyers, and the like; “Culture” includes artists, actors, directors, writers, and musicians; and “Media” consists of editors-in-chief, journalists, radio announcers, and heads of television companies and radio stations. In the “Economics” category, we distinguished between privatized enterprises and private business, on the one hand, and state-owned enterprises, on the other, in a formalistic way: if a company was classified as a joint-stock company (*aktsionernoye obshchestvo*) or in some other way indicated that it had collective or private ownership, it was placed in the “Private Business and Finance” sub-category. If it did not, it was coded as a state-owned enterprise.

Table 2 displays the positions that the 1055 elites listed in the 2002 directory occupied in 1996, approximately the midpoint of Boris Yel'tsin's tenure as president. The data show that at that time, only 4.3 percent of the 2002 elites were employed in the military or security fields—defined as those working in the FSB, Foreign Intelligence Service, military, MVD, border troops, railroad troops, and federal tax police, as well as cosmonauts.¹¹

But of course, data from 1996 alone do not tell the entire story; rather, we need to examine the percentage of elites who *ever* held a position in a security-related field. Therefore, we analyzed all eight data points for elites in our data base (i.e., jobs held in 1976, 1986, 1996, 2001, and the jobs they held immediately prior to the ones held in those four years). Although not every job ever held by a person was examined, we feel reasonably confident that if someone had been on a career path in the military-security field, our data would reveal it. For instance, it would be highly unlikely for a person to have held a position in one of Russia's “power ministries” for only one or two years and without the requisite educational training. Analysis of the eight data points reveals that an additional 6.4 percent of elites held

¹¹Those fulfilling the compulsory military service requirement were not included. Due to our coding scheme, we were unable to detect individuals working in the Ministry of Emergency Situations, Federal Protective Service (GUO), or Federal Agency for Government Communications and Information (FAPSI), but it is highly unlikely that this altered our results much.

Table 2. Employment of 2002 Societal Elites in 1996^a

General categories (with subcategories)	Percent employed in subcategory
Government	
Federal Government	12.8
State Duma and Federation Council	16.6
Parliamentary Staff	0.3
Presidential Administration	3.0
Judicial Branch (all levels)	3.9
Regional Government (executive and legislative)	8.9
Military and Security Organs	4.3
	49.8
Parties and Civic Groups	
Non-Governmental Political Work	3.6
Civic Associations	2.8
	6.4
Culture/Media/Professional	
White-Collar Professional	4.6
Culture and Religion	1.3
Media	11.7
	17.6
Economics	
Private Business and Finance	17.2
State-Owned Enterprises	4.6
	21.8
Other	
Student/Unemployed/Retired	1.0
Unknown	4.0
	5.0
Total ^b	100.6

^aSource: Data based on Mukhin (2002). N = 1055.

^bTotal does not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

positions in the military-security field at some point other than in 1996. Overall, this means that 10.7 percent of the societal elites in our data base have work experience in any of the security-related fields.

This finding is reinforced by the educational data in our subjects' biographies. To code the educational backgrounds of elites in the directory, we used the academic department in which they completed their undergraduate studies. If that information was not provided, we tried to infer their educational background from the type of university that they

Table 3. Age and Educational Training of Putin-Era Elites^a

	Political elites, 2002 ^b	Societal elites, 2002 ^c
Average age	51.5 years	51.9 years
With a higher education	100.0 percent	99.0 percent
With a military education	26.6 percent	8.9 percent
With an economic or legal education	25.7 percent	25.0 percent

^aSources: For political elites, Kryshtanovskaya and White (2003, Table 1); for societal elites, data based on Mukhin (2002).

^bN = 786.

^cN = 1055.

attended. In most cases, this was a relatively straightforward task. For example, an individual with a degree from the Novosibirsk Civil Engineering Institute was coded as having an engineering background; a graduate of the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography was coded as having a degree in the cultural field. We considered a “military education” to encompass those who graduated from or who had some educational training in a military school (*uchilishche*), a military academy, or an educational institution of the KGB or MVD.¹² An “economic or legal education” encompassed training in economics, finance, foreign trade, business administration, statistics, accounting, or law at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

Table 3 displays the percentage of our societal elites with a military education side by side with data on the political elites in the study by Kryshtanovskaya and White (2003). As the table shows, only 8.9 percent of our societal elites have a military education, while 25.0 percent have training in economics or law. Although the top-level political elites in the Kryshtanovskaya and White study have virtually the same degree of training in economics or law as do our societal elites, a much larger percentage of their elites have a military education (namely, 26.6 percent).¹³ As with the occupational data, the educational data for our broader group of elites do not exhibit the level of militarization suggested by Kryshtanovskaya and White’s study.

¹²The percentage of individuals with some military aspect to their educational training may be slightly understated, since our coding schema would exclude, for example, a graduate of a state university with a specialization in military interpreting.

¹³However, if the calculation procedure that they used is similar to that used to compute their “average by cohort” of military-security representatives, then this figure is presumably inflated as well. We cannot recalculate their data for education because the data are not disaggregated by elite sector.

We now turn to the second trend in elite formation under Putin that has been discussed in the literature, although to a lesser extent than the influx of the *siloviki*: the increased representation of the business sector. Kryshstanovskaya and White (2005, Table 4) find that the business elite increased its presence in the political elite (defined in their study as the “top leadership,” Duma deputies, government, and regional elite) from 4.4 percent in 1993 to 14.7 percent in 2003. Consistent with that result, our data show that 21.8 percent of the 2002 societal elite held leadership positions in the economics sector in 1996 (see Table 2). A minority of them, 4.6 percent, were working in state-owned enterprises as managers, deputy managers, or chief engineers, or as managers of state-run banks. A much larger percentage, 17.2 percent, was engaged in private business and finance—as managers of private firms, cooperatives, joint-stock companies, or joint ventures; managers of investment funds; managers or heads of departments of private banks; or traders in the stock exchange. Private business is thus the largest single arena in which the 2002 societal elites were working in 1996; moreover, individuals from this sphere are four times as numerous as those employed in the military or security field in 1996.

If we analyze once again the percentage of elites who *ever* held a position in the field in question, we find that 429 (or 40.7 percent) of the 1055 individuals in the societal elite held responsible positions in either state-owned enterprises or private economic concerns at some point in their careers. (To repeat, this includes jobs held in 1976, 1986, 1996, and 2001, as well the jobs held immediately prior to the ones held in those four years.) The majority of these positions were in some form of a private firm, bank, or investment fund rather than in the state sector, while 82 individuals report having experience in both. This means that nearly four times as many elites have high-level experience in business (more often than not, in a privately-held or collectively-owned concern) than work experience in the military-security sector.¹⁴

That there is considerable representation of business circles in the Russian elite is also supported by the educational data presented in Table 3. As mentioned earlier, 25.0 percent of the societal elites prominent in 2002 have an educational background either in economics or in the legal field. In sum, our data confirm Kryshstanovskaya and White’s finding of a growing presence of those from the business world in the Russian elite.

¹⁴It should be noted that the business elite and *siloviki* categories are not completely mutually exclusive. For instance, high-ranking *siloviki* in the Putin administration have been appointed to oversee state-owned corporations, such as Igor’ Sechin, chairman of the board of directors of Rosneft’, and Yevgeniy Shkolov, member of the board of directors of Transneft’ (O’Brien and Myers in *The New York Times*, June 12, 2005). The negative aspects of such a trend have been elaborated on by observers from both the liberal democratic and communist sides of the political spectrum (see Mulin in *Novaya gazeta*, no. 9, February 9, 2006; Delyagin in *Zavtra*, no. 6, February 9, 2006). In our group of elites, however, such overlap is negligible. Of the 1055 persons in our 2002 database, only 20 had experience in *both* the economics sector and the military-security world.

CONCLUSION

Existing research has found that after President Putin's assumption of power in 2000, the Russian elite was quickly transformed into a "militocracy." However, while the proportion of *siloviki* in the elite did increase during Putin's first term in office, their presence has not been nearly as great as previous research indicates. Some scholars have also detected an expanded role for representatives of business in the elite stratum. In contrast to the first finding, the magnitude of this trend has been underestimated. During this same period, the broader elite at the apex of Russian society came to include a substantial number of individuals from the private sector and/or with educational training in economics or law. In sum, even during the presidency of former KGB Lieutenant Colonel Putin, the Russian elite is considerably more bourgeois than militocratic.

Three implications, however tentative, follow from these trends. First, Putin has indeed taken aim at the business empires and personal fortunes of several of Russia's most prominent "oligarchs." In so doing, he has eliminated their direct or indirect influence on politics—most notably via the dissolution of their holdings in and control over independent or quasi-independent media outlets. At the same time, he has pursued pro-free market policies in most other sectors of the economy. The growing permeation of the societal elite by representatives of private business thus lends credence to Putin's repeated assertions that he is not against capitalism and private enterprise in general.¹⁵ Rather, he may simply prefer a more statist model of development for certain strategic sectors of the economy.

Second, our findings may be relevant to the future of democracy in Russia. One might expect the large number of entrepreneurs in the Russian elite to generate pressures for democratic reforms, or even a gradual return to democracy, after Putin's departure from the Kremlin. At a minimum, their presence could offset—or at least dilute—pressures in the opposite direction generated by the influx of *siloviki*.

Third, if Mosca's theory is correct, the incorporation into the elite of representatives of the country's major emerging social force—its capitalist class—will promote political stability, regardless of regime type. According to this view, the co-optation of the business elite may be a major—even if heretofore overlooked—explanation of why Russia under Putin has not experienced anything like the Rose, Orange, or Tulip Revolutions that have overthrown corrupt and/or semi-authoritarian regimes in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan during Putin's years in power.

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¹⁵For a recent example, see Myers (*The New York Times*, February 1, 2006).

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