

# Pathways to Partisanship in New Democracies: Evidence from Russia

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## **ABSTRACT**

Scholars focus extraordinary attention on party identification in established democracies, yet we know little about its origins. New democracies provide an opportunity to observe individuals as they first acquire partisan orientations. We investigate the development of partisanship shortly after the advent of multiparty competition in Russia. We group hypotheses from existing scholarship into several potential “pathways” to partisanship. The evidence indicates these factors are not equal. Political sophistication, voting experience, exposure to communication, and civic orientations contribute substantially more than group pressures and immersion in social networks to partisan stability, consistency, and self-identification. The results also help clarify a discrepancy between theories that see partisanship as a crutch for the unaware and evidence that partisans are the most sophisticated. We find elements of sophistication pushing in opposite directions – interest and expertise spur the acquisition of partisanship and the capacity to process information, acquired with education, dampens it.

## INTRODUCTION

Party identification plays a prominent role in the behavior of democratic citizens. Countless studies have emphasized its role as a “prime mover” that affects most other political beliefs and choices. Research in established democracies, however, has been limited in its ability to test predictions about the *development* of party identification. Indeed, to explore fully how and why citizens become attached to political parties, we need data from new democracies, where we can observe citizens as partisanship develops. In this paper, we examine micro-level evidence on the origins of partisanship in Russia during the early years of transition from Soviet rule to democratic elections and party competition.

In more than four decades of research, hundreds of articles and books have documented the wide-ranging effects of party identification and tirelessly tracked its levels and patterns (i.e., who identifies with which party) in specific electorates.<sup>1</sup> Many argue that party identification is *the* central organizing principle of mass politics. Citizens who see themselves as members of a party can assume politicians of that party share their interests and beliefs and thus greatly simplify their voting decision (Campbell et al. 1960). In this way, it serves as a heuristic that enables voters to make sensible choices, even though they typically lack the inclination or incentives to sort through the wealth of available information about their options (Fiorina 1990; Popkin 1994). Evidence for the effects of party identification extends beyond the vote to its capacity to shape attention, perception, learning, and the formation of new opinions (Bartels 2001; Lodge and Hamill 1986; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). At the aggregate level, scholars have touted party identification as a force that facilitates stable ties between politicians and citizens and that enables them to overcome collective action problems (Aldrich 1995).

Although the functional benefits of party identification have been well-discussed, empirical analyses of its emergence in democratic electorates are scarce. In older democracies, the origins of partisanship are obscured by the fog of history. At best, scholars can study the processes of socialization and conversion in these countries (Greenstein 1965; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Shively 1979). Such studies provide valuable clues, but the trail to party identification first blazed by citizens of a democracy may be different than the well-worn path taken by individuals in a country where party identification has long

been the norm (Barnes, McDonough, and Lopez Pina 1985). In new democracies such as Russia, however, we can observe partisanship develop from a *largely* pre-partisan “state of nature.”

The theoretical focus of this paper is the development of partisanship in general, regardless of the party to which one becomes attached.<sup>2</sup> Empirically, we investigate why some Russians, but not others, show signs of developing partisanship by 1995. Although we do not expect to observe fully-developed party identification at such an early stage of democratic transition, we can distinguish between Russians who exhibit initial tendencies toward partisanship and those who do not. In doing so, we not only begin to study how party identification emerges in a new democracy, but also have an opportunity to shed light on debates about the causes of partisanship more broadly. For example, although party identification is often conceived as a “crutch” for inattentive and poorly informed voters, data from the U.S. and elsewhere reveal that partisans tend to be the most attentive and best informed. Even so, the data usually say little about whether “political sophistication” is a cause or consequence of partisanship. Research in a new democracy can help resolve these tensions, as we observe whether partisanship first appears among politically-challenged or politically-savvy citizens.

In an effort to understand the origins of party identification, we therefore seek to bridge research on old and new democracies. The literature on the former is ripe with theoretical implications that can best be tested using data from the latter. In this paper, we turn to previous scholarship as a guide for generating hypotheses regarding the genesis of partisanship. We divide the hypotheses into several potential “pathways” to partisanship: (1) social salience, (2) social networks and exposure to information, (3) political sophistication, (4) civic orientations, and (5) political experience. After briefly describing the survey data from Russia and the measurement of key variables, we present our results in two stages. First, we test for the direct effect of the hypothesized factors on partisanship. Recognizing, however, that some factors may influence the development of partisanship indirectly through other variables, we also present a multi-stage model that captures these indirect effects.

The Russian case seems fertile ground for such an analysis. By the mid 1990s, Russia was heading into its second competitive parliamentary election and its first presidential election since the dissolution of

the Soviet Union. Russians faced a choice among numerous, genuinely competitive political parties, which were themselves still adapting to the novelty of democratic competition. Despite considerable uncertainty, Russians had strong incentives to make informed choices, as the parties for which they were voting would need to address such vital issues as transitions to a new economy, polity, and even nation (Offe 1991). Russia, therefore, offers an intriguing case for the analysis of the development of partisan attachments precisely because the pervasive uncertainty in the face of crucial policy choices should encourage a greater reliance on party identification, even as it simultaneously raises hurdles to the acquisition of such identification.

We find evidence of distinct pathways to partisanship in Russia, though not all paths are equally significant. Elements of political sophistication seem to be the most potent forces. However, these factors push in opposite directions. Interest and expertise, which reflect motivation to take part in politics and make the right choices, promote partisanship. Educational attainment, which reflects greater critical capacity and a lessened need for judgmental shortcuts, inhibits partisanship. This suggests at least a partial resolution to debates about the relationship between sophistication and party identification. Other factors matter as well. Voting experience and exposure to campaign communication contribute significantly to the crystallization of partisan attitudes. Some civic orientations, such as a belief in the efficacy of voting and feelings toward the transitional leadership, have a notable impact; others, such as views on party competition and motives for party support, do not. Cross-pressures from group memberships and immersion in social networks appear to work in the expected manner but have only modest effects.

### **EXPLAINING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTISANSHIP**

Political scientists have studied party identification for decades, but relatively little of this work has focused on its origins. Nonetheless, the existing literature provides a basis for general propositions on *how* party identification develops, as well as a few specific hypotheses on what promotes or discourages

its development. In this section, we present our approach to measuring partisanship and review several hypotheses about potential explanatory factors. We begin with a word about definitions and terminology.

Partisanship in mass electorates is most broadly conceived as a *predisposition* to support a particular political party. *Party identification* typically denotes a strong psychological conception of partisanship as an “affective orientation” toward a party that “raises a perceptual screen” through which the identifier interprets and organizes the political world in a partisan fashion (Campbell et al. 1960). A simpler and less powerful conceptualization holds partisanship to be a habitual tendency born of a loyal pattern of party support (Budge, Crewe, and Farley 1976; Key 1966). Both perspectives see a partisan as someone who is attracted consistently to one party over all others *ceteris paribus*. We are ultimately interested in the development of party identification in the strong sense. For reasons spelled out below, however, we assume Russians (and citizens in any new democracy) are unlikely to have acquired full identification so soon. Therefore, throughout the paper, we refer to party identification in a weaker, developmental form as “partisanship”, “party attachment”, or “partisan orientation”.

### *The Building Blocks of Partisanship*

Our goal is to understand better how and why voters develop partisanship in general, irrespective of the party preferred.<sup>3</sup> We derive three basic propositions about the formation of party identification from previous work. First, attachment to a political party grows with the cumulative effect of experience. Whether this effect is conceived as a “running tally” of rational evaluations (Achen 1989; Fiorina 1981) or the product of reference group socialization and habituation (Converse 1969; Gerber and Green 1998), repeated attraction to the same party reinforces a sense of partisan identity. Second, partisanship becomes more than a “standing decision” about how to vote, it becomes a frame of mind toward politics in general. As attachment strengthens, an individual’s attitudes and view of the political world are increasingly shaped with reference to her party of choice (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964; Lodge and Hamill 1986). Third, partisanship is ultimately based on rational evaluations of how well the individual fits with the party or how well the party suits the individual, although this does not mean that partisanship itself is

a rational evaluation. Even where partisanship is initially inherited uncritically from parents, voters will be drawn over time to those parties which seem to share their beliefs and values, serve their interests, and embrace people similar to themselves (Achen 1989; Campbell et al. 1960; Franklin and Jackson 1983; Fiorina 1981; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Miller and Shanks 1996).

We previously employed these propositions to explore the best means of observing partisanship in a new democracy and to make a general assessment of mass partisanship in early post-communist Russia (reference omitted). In developed democracies, researchers have used a variety of self-identification questions to tap the presence of party identification (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Johnston 1992). Surveys using similar measures were carried out in Russia during the early 1990s and yielded evidence of few party identifiers (Evans and Whitefield 1995; White, Rose, and McAllister 1997). This is not surprising in light of the conventional view of party identification and the propositions laid out above. Although it is open to debate whether it requires years, decades, or even generations, to develop (Beck 1974; Jennings and Niemi 1981) – a question research in new democracies can help answer (Miller and Klobucar 2000) – we expect identification with a party to emerge and strengthen *gradually*, over repeated opportunities to express partisan views and act on partisan preferences (Converse 1969).

Our approach therefore is to look for partisanship that may be developing towards, but almost certainly falls short of, party identification in the full sense. We discuss the precise measures of partisanship later but, building on the propositions above, we look beyond self-reported attachment to what can be seen as “building blocks” of party identification. Stability of party preferences and consistency of partisan evaluations may not be sufficient conditions for partisan identification, but they are certainly necessary for its initial emergence, and have indeed long been used to assess the crystallization of political attitudes (Converse 1964; Sears and Valentino 1997). Even though our long-term goal is to understand how *party identification* develops, we must begin by patiently observing the first hints of partisanship.<sup>4</sup>

### *Potential Pathways to Partisanship*

There is no overarching theory that seeks to explain how and why partisanship develops. The general propositions listed earlier emerge from attempts to explain the strength of party identification or attraction to particular parties, rather than from attempts to document why people become partisan. Socialization studies open a window to the acquisition of party identification among adolescents and young adults; yet, the transmission of parental identities seems an implausible source of partisanship for adult citizens facing newly competitive political parties. It is in the study of how and why adults become partisans that new democracies offer scholars a comparative advantage. We can observe individuals acquire and strengthen predispositions against what is nearly a partisan *tabula rasa*.<sup>5</sup>

In the remainder of this section, we draw on theories from established democracies as we lay out initial expectations about the forces that promote or inhibit the development of partisanship in new democracies. We do not purport to present a full theory of partisan emergence, but rather hope that our efforts at empirical examination contribute to the development of such a theory in the future. Because the hypotheses have not been constructed from a unified theory, they have the potential to overlap with or contradict one another. Finally, when appropriate, we formulate hypotheses with explicit reference to Russian society and politics.

*Social Salience.* If party politics consists of competition among coalitions of groups, then party attachment is likely to be a political extension of a person's group membership (Campbell et al. 1960; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). Partisanship may have a rational basis, but the point of reference is one's group: "What have you done for *my group* lately?" Studies of older democracies emphasize the often deep roots of these group-party links (Converse 1969; Lipset and Rokkan 1967), so the question becomes, "What have you done for my group *historically*?" Of course not all groups, or social cleavages, are equally salient for politics at all times (Schattschneider 1960). Therefore, we expect a higher rate of partisanship among those whose social identities are most relevant to current policy disputes.

Lazarsfeld and colleagues (1944) also draw attention to the importance of *cross-pressures*. Individuals often see themselves as members of more than one group. Although the political implications of these

groups can be quite consistent, for some individuals they are not. Simultaneous membership in groups with distinct party ties creates cross-pressures that make it more difficult for a voter to decide which party to support. We thus expect fewer partisans among those who are cross-pressured by their social identities.

*Social Networks and Exposure to Information.* A second set of social processes, rooted in interpersonal communication rather than group identity, may influence partisanship. This could happen in two ways. First, Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) point to “personal influence” as a powerful mechanism in the development and maintenance of political attitudes. In fact, for the great number of citizens who pay little attention to public affairs, the primary source of political information may be trusted acquaintances. Second, exposure to campaign politics, and especially campaign communication, can accelerate the crystallization of partisan attitudes (Converse 1962; Sears and Valentino 1997; Valentino and Sears 1998).

Immersion in social networks may also produce pressures for a consistent party affiliation. Some organizations, like labor unions or civic groups, create regular settings for social influence and implicit (or explicit) demands for conformity (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Verba 1961). Furthermore, the process of party “activation,” whereby parties recruit citizens into routines of support and participation, builds on social networks (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Indeed, in established democracies, parties have increasingly tried to lower the costs of mobilization by tapping into pre-existing networks (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000).<sup>6</sup> Even though civil society remained anemic in the first decade of post-communist Russia, we expect social influence to accelerate the onset of partisanship among Russians who stand out as socially active and who encounter larger volumes of campaign communication.

*Political Sophistication.* Scholars come to different conclusions about the way in which party identification emerges as a rational response to problems of information search. Downs (1957) posits party labels as an elite-provided cue to overcome voters’ incentives for rational ignorance. Building on this perspective, Shively (1979) poses the “decisional function” hypothesis: The fewer “resources” a voter possesses to “pay the costs” of information needed to make an electoral choice, the more likely she is to acquire a party identification. Recent research reaffirms voters’ reliance on judgmental shortcuts; for example, voters can infer attitudes toward new policies according to where fellow partisans stand (Popkin

1994; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). If partisanship works as a decision-making crutch for those who lack information, then we expect informationally-handicapped voters to depend on it most.

Decades of empirical research, however, point in the opposite direction: The best informed are the most partisan (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964; Miller and Shanks 1996). These findings suggest that party identification emerges as a product of rational information-seeking, rather than as a solution to rational ignorance. Although sophisticated voters expose themselves more frequently to information that could change their preferences, the repository of prior information that under girds their predispositions is many times larger than among the less informed (Converse 1962; Fiorina 1981; Zaller 1992). Voters who are interested in politics also acquire information more readily (Fiorina 1990).<sup>7</sup>

In a new democracy such as Russia, we have further cause to consider this debate anew. Citizens face relatively high information costs. In making a choice, voters must navigate new political procedures without the benefit of repeated experience in casting a vote that matters. Post-communist Russians are indeed “transitional citizens” (Colton 2000b). Given the large gap between informational demands and political experience for most of the electorate, we anticipate even stronger support for the second hypothesis above; that is, we expect politically interested and knowledgeable Russians to acquire partisanship earlier than their “less sophisticated” countrymen and women.

*Civic Orientations.* Others focus on the role of norms and civic attitudes in facilitating full integration into democratic politics. *The Civic Culture* (Almond and Verba 1963), a classic statement in this vein, proposes that democracy is sustained by adherence to certain principles, beliefs about citizen-government relations, and participatory inclinations. “Good citizens” take their responsibilities seriously and, as a result, may develop stronger convictions. Shively (1979) argues that civic duty motivates citizens to cast a responsible vote and thereby encourages less-educated voters to develop partisanship as a guide.

The role of civic orientations is not necessarily the same everywhere. In a society transitioning from one-party authoritarian rule, citizens may be suspicious of both elections and political parties. All too familiar with voting as a sham perpetrated by the ruling government, Russians who do not feel their participation is meaningful should be less likely to develop attachments. Research on post-communist

transitions suggests a great deal of “negative” voting, in which citizens vote for a party because of what it opposes, rather than what it supports (Rose and Mishler 1998). Positive motives may provide a firmer basis for long-term partisanship.

Citizen actions amid the uncertainty of transitional periods also can be highly susceptible to political leadership. President Boris Yeltsin often adopted a contemptuous posture toward parties, considered himself “above the fray” of party politics, and disavowed any affiliation for himself. His unwillingness to engage in party-building meant, among other things, that the identity of the party most closely associated with the government shifted with each election cycle. We would not be surprised then if attitudes toward *the* dominant figure of Russia’s first post-communist decade and his government have implications for who develops partisanship. Yeltsin supporters may acquire partisanship more slowly than opponents, either because they follow his example or because the partisan implications of their support are less clear.

*Political Experience.* We conclude our discussion of potential pathways by returning to the most basic building block of party identification, namely that political experience – such as voting and participation in political activities – creates opportunities for the manifestation of preferences that, if consistent over time, can accumulate into a predisposition. Beyond pure expressions of support, *acting* on the basis of attitudes plays an important role in the crystallization of those attitudes (Petty and Krosnick 1995). Therefore, we expect more partisanship among politically-active Russians.

Another element of political experience in Russia suggests a caveat to our claim that the electorate is a partisan *tabula rasa*. Although party competition was novel for Russians in the 1990s, they were of course familiar with the former ruling party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Loyalty to the CPSU is the only trace of partisanship citizens could carry into the new system. Its reverberations are unlikely to resemble the transmission of party identities in established democracies, as partisanship clearly means something different under multiparty democracy than under one-party rule. Nonetheless, through their activities, former party members may have been socialized into greater commitment to the communist cause. To the extent they may feel a natural affinity for the Communist Party of the Russian

Federation (KPRF), or perhaps even towards the concept of a political party more generally, we expect partisanship to develop faster among former members of the CPSU.<sup>8</sup>

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We have proposed to follow five paths that may lead citizens in a new democracy to partisanship and, someday, party identification. The origins of partisanship may lie in (1) the salience of an person's social group membership, (2) her embeddedness in social networks and exposure to political communication, (3) the drive for information dictated by her level of political sophistication, (4) the motivations of her civic outlook, and (5) the crystallization of political experience. These hypotheses are not exhaustive of all possibilities, but we believe they reflect the best candidates implied by existing theories. The paths are also by no means mutually exclusive; indeed, there is considerable potential for overlap among them.

#### **DATA AND MEASURES**

To test the preceding hypotheses, we present evidence from a national survey of Russians. The survey includes 2,841 respondents and was conducted under the direction of Timothy Colton and William Zimmerman. The survey has a three-wave panel design: Respondents were interviewed three to four weeks before the 1995 parliamentary election, interviewed again shortly following that election, and interviewed a third time shortly after the 1996 presidential election. The retention rate was excellent with 2,776 (97.7%) respondents completing the second wave and 2,456 (86.4%) completing the third wave.<sup>9</sup> In this section of the paper, we briefly discuss the electoral context and measurement of key variables.

The December, 1995, parliamentary election produced a disastrous showing for pro-government (Our Home is Russia) and pro-reform (Russia's Democratic Choice, Yabloko) parties. The most successful party was the anti-reform Communist Party of the Russian Federation. The ironically named Liberal Democratic Party of Russia – headed by ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy – also enjoyed moderate success. In the aftermath of the election, President Yeltsin staged a remarkable comeback to eventually triumph in the two-round presidential election in mid-1996.<sup>10</sup>

For measurement of the dependent variable, we rely on a combination of behavioral and attitudinal indicators. As discussed above, we do not claim to measure full party identification but, rather, precursors to the development of such an identity. Specifically, we look for signs of stability and consistency in party support.

Our first dependent variable is a simple measure of stability in party preference (*Stability*) derived from the first two waves of the survey. Specifically, it is a dichotomous variable scored as 1 if a respondent reports voting in the 1995 parliamentary election (wave 2) for the same party that he reported an intention to vote for during the campaign (wave 1).<sup>11</sup> Only voters have an opportunity to display such loyalty, therefore non-voters are excluded from the analysis of stability.<sup>12</sup> Of respondents who report voting (68.4%), slightly more than half (53.6%) displayed this modest degree of partisan stability.

The wholesale exclusion of one-third of the sample from analysis leaves us uncomfortable. Even though non-voters seem particularly unlikely candidates for partisanship (Miller and Shanks 1996), we do not wish to prejudge the issue entirely. Therefore, the second and third dependent variables measure consistency across partisan evaluations (*Consistency*) that do not depend on the act of voting. Both employ a scale designed to capture the reliability with which a respondent evaluates her preferred party more highly than other parties. We construct two versions using alternative questions as indicators of the respondent's preferred party, either vote intention for the parliamentary election (*Consistency<sub>INT</sub>*) or self-reported attachment (*Consistency<sub>ID</sub>*). Each version is an additive scale in which the respondent receives one point each time she ranks her party higher than all others across six items: (1) trust; (2) closeness to the people; (3) preparedness to govern; (4) likelihood of ensuring peace; (5) feeling thermometers; and (6) either vote intention or self-reported attachment, whichever one is not used as the indicator of preferred party. Respondents who do not report a vote intention or an attachment are coded as 0. Roughly half of all respondents score at the midpoint or higher on either scale, and the two measures are closely correlated ( $r = 0.67$ ). Both versions of the variable are rescaled so that they range from 0 to 1.

Finally, the fourth dependent variable is *Self-identification* with a party. Despite our reservations about self-reports as *the* measure of party identification in this context, the willingness to identify a party

as one's own or as reflective of one's interests may reasonably be regarded as one more indicator of partisanship. In contrast to the few citizens who explicitly say they "identify" (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997), slightly more than half of Russians by 1995 express some form of closeness to a party (Brader and Tucker 2001; Miller and Klobucar 2000).

One explanatory variable – the extent to which citizens are cross-pressured in their party choice – requires a more detailed explanation. Lazarsfeld and colleagues (1944) advanced the concept of cross-pressures over a half-century ago and used nested crosstabulation to demonstrate their impact. However, the measurement of cross-pressures has not been updated for use with contemporary, multivariate estimation techniques. We want a summary measure of the extent to which an individual is *Cross-pressured* by his social group memberships. Rather than create dummy variables for cross-pressured subgroups based on assumptions about which groups are likely to support which parties, we use the data to estimate the degree to which each individual faces either reinforcing or conflicting pressures.

For purposes of illustration, consider a world with two parties – the Communists and Democrats – that are each preferred by approximately half of the population and two key demographic distinctions – age (old or young) and the size of one's community (urban or rural) – that also split the population in half. Assume the Communists are favored by older citizens and those from the countryside, while the Democrats tend to enjoy greater support in cities and among the young. If regression analysis returned a set of coefficients reflecting these relationships, we could generate the predicted probability that each of four prototypical citizens votes for either of the parties. One such set of hypothetical results is shown in Table 1. Notice that voters who are subject to reinforcing social forces, like those in the upper-right and lower-left cells of the table, are propelled more strongly toward one party than the other. As a result, the variance across their predicted probabilities is substantial. Similarly, voters in the upper-left and lower-right cells experience cross-pressures that leave them relatively indecisive in choosing a party. The variance across their predicted probabilities is low. The social salience hypothesis predicts that the first set of voters is more likely to develop partisanship than the second. More generally, citizens with higher variance across the predicted probabilities of party choice are more likely to become partisan.

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For our analysis, we build on the intuition in the preceding example to estimate the extent to which respondents are cross-pressured by their social position. First, we draw a random subsample, stratified to contain an equal number of voters for each of the top eight parties.<sup>13</sup> Stratification ensures a uniform marginal probability (0.125) of voting for each party, which prevents the predicted probabilities from being overwhelmed by the actual distribution of supporters in the full sample, while still allowing us to estimate the social determinants of the vote. Second, for this subsample, we estimate a multinomial logit (MNL) model of the party vote using a battery of demographic variables.<sup>14</sup> We use the MNL estimates to generate predicted probabilities for the full sample on the basis of each respondent's social characteristics. This allows us to calculate the variance of the set of eight predicted probabilities for each voter. Again, the variance is high for respondents who are very likely to vote for one party and unlikely to vote for all seven others; the variance is much lower for respondents who are torn equally between several parties. We repeat the sampling procedure ten times to arrive at a mean value for each respondent's variance that is less likely to be an artifact of a particular subsample. Finally, we subtract the mean value of the variance from one, so that high levels indicate more cross-pressures.

We explain how the remaining explanatory variables are measured as they arise in the presentation of results. For each of the five potential paths to partisanship, we include a number of variables that tap into the processes described.<sup>15</sup> All variables are rescaled to range from 0 to 1, making coefficients more directly comparable to one another and across samples (Achen 1982).

Two additional variables – *Age* and sex (*Male*) – require mention because their use was not previewed in the discussion of theory. Neither fits neatly into any of the five pathways. Nonetheless, in asking why some individuals are more likely to become partisan, it seems prudent to consider whether these personal attributes play a role. Age and sex are rarely absent from analyses of voting and party identification, whether as key variables of interest or statistical controls. Furthermore, in established democracies, a life-cycle perspective on age figures prominently in accounts of how partisanship develops and strengthens (Converse 1969; Jennings and Niemi 1981). Although a life-cycle approach seems ill-suited to the study

of partisanship in new democracies, a perspective that views age in terms of generational differences may be very appropriate. Indeed, scholars have suggested that older Russians, who are more attached to the old regime and least able to adapt to the transition, may have strong incentives to mobilize in support of opposition parties, especially the backward-looking Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) (Colton 2000a). The most likely role for sex lies in differential patterns of political interest and involvement produced by gender role socialization. In Russia, as in many countries, men dominate the higher echelons of government and their participation in politics is seen as more natural (Colton 2000a).

### **EVIDENCE: DIRECT EFFECTS**

We begin the empirical analysis by looking for direct evidence that the hypothesized factors affect partisanship. Each of the four indicators of developing partisanship – stability of preferences, both measures of attitudinal consistency, and self-reported attachment – are regressed on the same sixteen explanatory variables. Because stability and self-reported attachment are measured as dichotomous variables, results were generated by maximum likelihood estimation of a logit model. Estimates for the consistency scales were generated by ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. The unstandardized coefficients and standard errors from all four equations are displayed in Table 2.

The most striking results come from the political sophistication pathway. There are three measures: (1) *Political engagement*, an index of how much the respondent follows politics, talks to others about politics, and is interested in the election; (2) *Political awareness*, an index of political knowledge, comprehension, and ability to evaluate political figures, developed by Colton (2000b, 244); and (3) *Education*, a scale indicating the highest level of schooling completed.

Our analysis most strongly supports the view that sophistication accelerates the development of partisanship. Both political engagement and awareness increase the stability of party preferences, the consistency of partisan evaluations, and the likelihood of self-identification. The effects are substantial. If a person moves from the 20th to 80th percentile of engagement, the probability that she has stable preferences increases by .08, the expected value of her consistency score rises one-sixth the length of the

index, and the probability that she self-identifies with a party increases by .23. A similar shift in awareness produces .06 and .09 increases in the probabilities of stability and self-identification, and an increase in the expected value of consistency one-twelfth the length of the index. The potential effects, from a minimum to maximum shift, are even larger; for example, the probability of stability is .25 higher for most engaged person than it is for the least and .16 higher for the most aware than for the least.<sup>16</sup>

There is also evidence to support the decisional shortcut perspective. Once we control for interest and expertise in politics, educated Russians are less likely to show signs of partisanship. Education has a statistically-significant, negative coefficient in two instances, *Self-Identification* and *Consistency<sub>ID</sub>*, and sizeable negative coefficients in the remaining cases. As an otherwise identical person shifts from having no secondary school diploma to college education or better, the expected value of his *Consistency<sub>ID</sub>* score decreases by .18 and the predicted probabilities that he has stable preferences and self-identifies with a party each drop .23.<sup>17</sup>

These results may help to clarify a long-standing discrepancy about the role of political sophistication in the development of partisanship, at least as suggested by citizens in a new democracy. As long as we consider citizens at similar levels of engagement and awareness, greater capacity to process information and make electoral decisions, as reflected in educational attainment, may render partisanship less useful, as Shively (1979) and others predicted. Thus, distinct elements of “sophistication” push in opposite directions: political involvement and expertise fuel partisanship and the critical faculties acquired with education dampen it, a relationship that can be obscured by the strong correlation between these factors.

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There is far less support in these results for the salience of social memberships as a determinant of partisanship. Contrary to long-standing assumptions, the Russians most cross-pressured by their social characteristics are *not* less likely to become partisans. The estimated effect of cross-pressures is not distinguishable from zero in any of the four equations in Table 2; no coefficient even has the correct sign.

In light of the findings on sophistication, however, we perform an additional test to see if the effect of social pressures is conditional on the capacity to make sense of links between group interests and parties

(as measured by the interaction term, *Education*  $\times$  *Cross-Pressured*). As educational attainment rises, the presence of strong cross-pressures begins to undermine the stability of party preferences, and the presence of reinforcing group-party pressures begins to enhance stability. For college educated Russians, a change in the level of cross-pressures from the 20th to 80th percentile creates a corresponding drop of between .04 and .05 in the predicted probability of stability. The impact is noticeable but not large, in part because the vast majority of Russians are not distributed across the entire scale; to the contrary, the percentile shift represents only one-sixth the distance theoretically possible. Evidence from other indicators of partisanship is weaker. The estimated effects on self-reported attachment and on one of the measures of consistency (*Consistency*<sub>ID</sub>) are similar in magnitude and direction, but the size of the standard errors does not allow us to be fully confident in these estimates. Nonetheless, because predictions are based on both the interaction and base terms, the estimated impact on consistency and self-identification are significant ( $p < .10$ ) and show decreases of .03 and .05, respectively. In sum, we find modest evidence to support the hypothesized relationship between cross-pressures and partisanship, but, in the new Russian democracy, the relationship is visible only among more educated citizens.

Social networks and exposure to political communication also play a role. The principal measure employed here is *Exposure to Campaign Information*, an index of how much information about the election the respondent has encountered on television, in newspapers, and in printed campaign materials. Consistent with predictions, Russians who come across more discussion and propaganda about the election display greater attitudinal consistency and are more likely to self-identify. From low to high volumes of exposure, we expect to see an increase in consistency of .05 and in the probability of self-identification of .09. Something different occurs with the stability of party preferences. Although the estimate falls short of statistical significance, the sign is reversed and exposure to campaign communication implies that preferences are less stable.

As an indicator of ties to social networks and susceptibility to activation, we examine *Residential Stability*, measured as the proportion of a respondent's life lived in his community. One might expect stable residents to have more dense social ties that could hasten the onset of partisanship. However, we

find stable party preferences are more visible among mobile citizens. Proponents of the decisional shortcut view of party identification could interpret these results as evidence that long-term members of the community do not require as much guidance as new arrivals. Yet, there is room to argue that, even controlling for other factors, socially mobile Russians are more likely to be in the sorts of networks tapped by parties, an explanation consistent with the original exposure-network hypothesis.

Our tests of the civic orientations pathway produce several clear findings. Most notably, partisanship is higher among Russians who believe in the *Efficacy of Voting* (i.e., that voting will change things). This relationship holds across all four indicators of partisanship and the impact is sizeable. Those who more strongly believe voting matters (80th vs. 20th percentile) have a higher probability of both stable preferences (.05) and self-reported attachment (.15) and score roughly one-tenth the length of the index higher on consistency. In contrast, we find no evidence of a relationship for two other political beliefs. Citizens who agree that party competition “makes our system stronger” (*View of Party Competition*) are no more likely to show signs of partisanship than those who disagree. Similarly, the development of partisanship is unaffected by the *Motives for Party Support*, whether positive (i.e., support parties because of their programs and promises) or negative (i.e., support parties because of what they oppose).

Orientations toward the transitional leadership have a negative effect on partisanship consistent with expectations. Russians who like Yeltsin (*Affect toward Yeltsin*) are significantly less likely to show signs of stability and consistency than their comrades who despise him. The impact on self-identification is similar but falls shy of statistical significance. The probability of stable preferences is .12 lower for individuals who like the president the most than for those who like him least. The president’s fans also score .09 and .06 lower on the indicators of consistency. Yeltsin’s effect on the development of partisanship is consistent with his rejection of a party label and the shifting identity of the party most closely associated with his administration.<sup>18</sup> We see the same, albeit weaker, relationship in a second measure, *Trust in the Government*.

The fifth pathway shifts attention from attitudes to behavior. In considering whether political activity crystallizes partisan attitudes, our analysis suggests that contemporary experience in the new democracy

matters more than experiences under the prior regime. We included a measure of *Voting Experience* that indicates whether the respondent voted never, once, or twice, in the two previous national elections, the 1991 presidential election and the 1993 parliamentary election. As Table 2 shows, citizens with voting experience make more consistent evaluations and are more likely to report attachment to a party. The coefficient for stability is also positive, but it is too small relative to its standard error to engender confidence in the relationship. The gains from voting experience are substantial. The levels of attitudinal consistency are nearly one-fifth ( $Consistency_{INT}$ ) and one-tenth ( $Consistency_{ID}$ ) of the scale higher for Russians who voted in both previous elections compared to those who voted in neither. The probability of self-identification is also .09 greater for regular voters. Consistent with predictions, the partisanship of citizens in a new democracy markedly strengthens as they acquire experience with the act of voting.

The strong impact of voting experience contrasts with the anemic legacy of membership in the CPSU. By 1995, *Former Members of the CPSU* are no more likely to exhibit stability or consistency in partisan orientations than their fellow citizens. They are modestly more likely to self-identify with a party, yet even this relationship is not on very firm footing ( $p < .086$ ; predicted probability of identification is .06 higher). This is not to say membership is without consequence: Former members who show signs of partisanship are more likely than the population at large to support the successor party, the KPRF (Brader and Tucker 2001; Colton 2000b). In addition, the organizational strength of the KPRF clearly builds on the remnants of the CPSU. At the individual level, however, the socialized experience of Communist party membership does not translate into a strong disposition for partisanship under the new regime.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, we turn to the two most personal characteristics in our analysis, age and sex. Older Russians are more likely to express attachment to a party and exhibit higher levels of consistency ( $Consistency_{ID}$ ). The three-decade difference in perspective that divides 32- and 63-year-old Russians adds .06 to an individual's attitudinal consistency and .10 to the probability of self-identification. These findings are consistent with predictions, many of which are based on the presumption that pensioners are particularly attracted to one party, the KPRF. Do these results imply a general relationship between age and partisanship, or are they driven by the attractiveness of the Communists to the older generation(s)? To

answer this question, we separate respondents into six age groups (i.e., 18-29, 30-39, etc.) and compare rates of non-identification, identification with the KPRF, and identification with any other party, across the “lifespan.” The results confirm that the effect is driven by high levels of Communist identification among the three oldest groups (i.e., respondents over age 49); the probability of identification with the KPRF increases monotonically across all ages. Once KPRF identifiers are removed, however, the probability of identifying with any other party flattens out or even declines slightly in later years.

Evidence that sex directly affects the emergence of partisanship is weak and contradictory. Men show greater stability in party preferences ( $p < .072$ ); substantively, the probability is .05 higher for men than for women. Although this is consistent with the deeper immersion of Russian men into political life, there is also tentative evidence that women exhibit greater consistency in partisan attitudes.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, there is no evidence that members of either sex have a higher rate of consciously identifying a party as their own.

#### **EVIDENCE: INDIRECT EFFECTS**

Prior research on political behavior suggests that some of the most powerful explanatory variables in Table 2 have their origins, at least partially, in other variables in the model. Given our interest in tracing the paths by which citizens in Russia’s new democracy develop partisanship, we do not want to omit or understate the role of some attribute, pressure, attitude, or behavior, of interest because its explanatory power is hidden behind a disposition it helps to produce. For example, experiences as a former member of the CPSU may exert only a mild direct effect on party attachment, but membership may have left an imprint on levels of political interest and knowledge, which in turn strongly affect partisanship. More broadly, the strength of the findings on political engagement, awareness, efficacy, and exposure, beg for further explanation as to their origins. In this section, we consider evidence that other factors indirectly affect the development of partisanship through these four variables.<sup>21</sup>

In order to analyze these indirect effects, we separately estimate models of engagement, exposure, awareness, and efficacy, using OLS regression. Based on previous research in social psychology and political science, we also posit a causal ordering among these four variables. The sequence begins with

political engagement: As an individual becomes more interested in politics, we expect she will expose herself to more political information, be more willing and able to learn about politics, and be more likely to believe in the value of political processes. Exposure to information comes next and is obviously a precondition to acquiring knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Finally, in established democracies, higher levels of political knowledge and awareness seem to generate stronger beliefs in the efficacy of democratic processes such as voting. The complete causal model is illustrated in Figure 1.

--- INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE ---

Each dependent variable enters all subsequent stages as an explanatory variable. There are a few other changes as well. The four attitudes in the civic orientation pathway, beyond belief in the efficacy of voting, are dropped from this part of the analysis, because they are not plausible antecedents of the dependent variables. Voting experience is also not included in these models because its causal status is uncertain.<sup>23</sup> Nine new variables enter the analysis to capture better the effects of an individual's social and physical place in society, particularly the likely political impact of inclusion in or exclusion from important social networks. These largely demographic characteristics include *Trade Union Membership*, *Civic Organization Membership*, *Social Activity* (an additive scale of how often an individual socializes with friends, family, and neighbors), residence in *Moscow*, residence in another *Urban* community or a *Rural* community (as opposed to medium-sized towns and cities), *Income*, whether the individual is *Unemployed*, and *Russian* ethnicity.<sup>24</sup> The results for all four equations are shown in Table 3.

--- INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE ---

As the first column of results in Table 3 indicates, many factors affect levels of political engagement. In fact, all variables except one show a significant relationship to interest in politics, and the sole exception, residence in Moscow, has an estimate about half again as large as its standard error ( $p < .156$ ). The majority of these characteristics also influence exposure to information and levels of political awareness. As expected, interest in politics has a substantial impact on both exposure and awareness. The impact of exposure on awareness also matches expectations. In contrast to the other stages, only four

variables are significant in predicting belief in the efficacy of voting; in particular, note that neither exposure nor awareness influence efficacy when controlling for political engagement.

Clearly, there exists considerable potential for indirect effects on the indicators of partisanship. Many of the explanatory factors in Table 3 affect one or more of engagement, exposure, awareness, and efficacy, which in turn are among the most salient predictors of partisanship (Table 2). But are these indirect effects substantial? Using the same percentile or range shifts as before, we generate predictions about the indirect impact of each explanatory factor by tracing its expected effects through the stages shown in Figure 1 and estimated in Tables 2 and 3. For example, we calculate the effect of a percentile shift in age on the expected value of each of the four mediating variables. In addition, the impact of age on political engagement echoes through the subsequent three stages and its impact on exposure also affects political awareness. From all of these calculations, we arrive at an expected shift in the level of each mediating variable. Returning to the results in Table 2, we estimate how the expected shifts in the levels of engagement, exposure, awareness, and efficacy, affect a particular indicator of partisanship. The sum of all four possible effects in this “outcomes analysis” (cf. Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001) is what we call the total (predicted) indirect effect of age on that indicator of partisanship. For the sake of brevity, we report only the quantities in which we are mainly interested, namely the total indirect effect of each variable on partisanship, not every component used to calculate that effect. Both direct effects and total indirect effects are displayed separately for each indicator of partisanship in Figures 2 through 5.

--- INSERT FIGURES 2, 3, 4, AND 5 ABOUT HERE ---

A number of these effects are relatively minor, but several are substantial and on par with the magnitude of the direct relationships. Two particularly noteworthy examples of indirect influence relate to the discussion of how sophistication affects partisanship. First, the conflicting impulses of education are now visible. A shift from no diploma to college or better education ripples through increasing levels of political interest and knowledge to boost the probability of stable party preferences and partisan self-identification by .04 and .07, respectively, and the expected level of consistency in partisan attitudes by

.06. Except in the case of one consistency measure, however, these indirect effects merely mitigate some of education's negative impact on partisanship and do not offset it entirely.

The fact that political engagement also has a sizeable indirect component is not surprising, given its place at the start of the causal chain in Figure 1. In contrast to education, the mediated and unmediated effects of engagement reinforce one another. By considerably influencing all three other intermediary variables, political interest enhances its already substantial impact on partisanship by anywhere from one quarter to one third, depending on the indicator. For example, a percentile shift in engagement produces an increase of .34 in the probability of self-identification that stems from a direct increase of .23 and an indirect increase of .11. Taking both types of influence into consideration, a citizen's level of interest in politics appears to be the single most potent predictor of whether she will acquire a partisan orientation.<sup>25</sup>

We previously noted that, in comparison to the role played by elements of political sophistication, social pressures are a relatively modest force in explaining the development of partisanship. Our analysis suggests these pressures also indirectly influence partisanship but in a somewhat paradoxical manner. As the salient features of a voter's social position make it more difficult to choose the "right" party, he becomes more interested in politics, more exposed to information about election campaigns, and more knowledgeable about the political world. In contrast to our earlier findings, though, this holds primarily for the *least* educated stratum of the Russian electorate. The cumulative effect on partisanship remains rather small, however, as an increase in the extent to which an individual is cross-pressured increases the level of consistency and the probability of self-identification by no more than .03 to .04; the effect on the probability of stable preferences is even less.

We also examine a number of social attributes that do not directly shape the acquisition of party attachments but seem to be sensible measures of an individual's immersion in social networks. As indicated in Figures 2 through 5, the evidence supports the contention that these attributes have a mediated impact on the development of partisanship through interest, exposure, and awareness. First, membership in either trade unions or various civic organizations can lead to an increase of between .03 and .05 in the probability of self-identification and in the level of attitudinal consistency. Second, citizens

who are more social with friends, family, and neighbors, show higher levels of consistency and self-reported attachment. On average, a percentile shift in the level of a person's social activity corresponds to an increase of .05 in both consistency and identification, though this is only about one-fourth of the potential effect of a shift between the extremes of social activity.

If the extent of a person's involvement in "civil society" shapes partisanship, his social and economic position within that society may do so as well. Ethnic Russians develop partisanship sooner than non-Russian citizens, in part because of their greater interest in politics and likelihood of encountering campaign information. Likewise, individuals who are out of work are less likely to be partisan, because their interest and expertise is even more likely than other citizens to lie somewhere other than the realm of politics. Political engagement, exposure, and belief in the efficacy of voting also rise with income. Even though the relationship is strong and statistically significant, however, the indirect effect of income on partisanship is negligible for most Russians. A shift from the 20th to the 80th percentile in earnings produces a change of less than .01 in any of the indicators. The potential impact of income is many times that level, but that potential is only relevant for well-off Russians, who were quite rare in 1995.

Finally, an individual's ties to social networks and general exposure to politics may be a function of physical location. Confirming the forty-year-old suspicions of Converse and his colleagues (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1962), residents of rural areas are less likely to acquire partisan attachments due to greater isolation from and obliviousness about politics, especially at the national level. The impact is not large but it appears robust.<sup>26</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, residence in the most urban areas of Russia has a similar net effect on partisanship. City-dwellers are slightly less partisan too. This effect, mitigated somewhat by their greater awareness of political facts, is driven by their diminished interest in public affairs, which is perhaps less surprising given the compelling distractions and alternatives of city life. For residents of the capital city, Moscow, the effect is offset entirely by their much higher levels of exposure to campaign communications. Disinterested Muscovites have a harder time avoiding politics than their countrymen elsewhere. What about citizens who change locations? Our earlier finding that residential stability has a negative impact is strengthened by this second round of analysis. What was previously

visible only for partisan stability is now suggested for all indicators of partisanship. The expected impact is not great, but the pattern of reduced partisanship is buttressed through reduced interest in and exposure to politics, as well as through a diminished sense that voting matters. The only mitigating force comes from the positive effect of residential stability on political awareness. Although we remain somewhat intrigued by these findings, it could be that Russia's "movers and shakers," in a literal sense, are most likely to be attracted to party politics and party politics to them.

The final pieces of evidence on indirect effects are some of the most substantial and relate more to who a person is, or indeed *was*. Whereas former membership in the governing party of the Soviet Union (i.e., the CPSU) shows few signs of having socialized individuals toward a disposition for partisanship, it may have generated or enlarged dispositions toward politics generally.<sup>27</sup> Former CPSU members are much more interested in and knowledgeable about politics, and they are more likely to consume information about it. The result is an increase of .06 in the level of partisan consistency and a gain of .03 and .07 in the probability of stable preferences and self-identification, respectively. Older Russians are also more likely to show signs of partisanship in general through indirect channels. Although younger citizens fare better on the index of political awareness, the consequences of this for partisan stability, consistency, and self-identification are overwhelmed by the fact that older citizens are more engaged and exposed and believe more strongly in the efficacy of voting. As result, partisan consistency and the prospects of self-reported attachment grow substantially with age. Finally, our findings on the influence of gender, which were mixed in the initial analysis, are less muddy here. Consistent with gender roles and sex differences in social status in Russia (as in many other countries), men are considerably more attracted to politics and display higher levels of political awareness than women. Owing to these differences, male citizens show added stability in their preferences, consistency in their attitudes, and reported attachment to a party.

Our decision to analyze the indirect routes through which a citizen's attributes can influence the acquisition of partisanship has been fruitful in a number of ways. We have a richer understanding of what lies behind some of the most significant findings in our original model. Although not all individual variation in political engagement and expertise have been explained, we can say more about those who

are developing partisan ties than simply that they are “more interested.” This round of analysis also clarifies several relationships that are fuzzy or obscured when one looks only at the direct model. First, it confirms the conflicting tendencies generated by educational advancement and underscores the importance of separating the interest-expertise and cognitive capacity dimensions of sophistication when discussing its relationship to acquiring partisan orientations. Second, we uncover considerable evidence for how a citizen’s place in society – socially, economically, and physically – can shape the development of partisanship. Third, we also found that factors such as former membership in the CPSU, age, and sex, contribute more through mediating levels of engagement, exposure, and awareness, than they do directly. Finally, in a few instances, this analysis helps to confirm the existence of relationships that we were *not* entirely expected, such as differential consequences of cross-pressures for distinct educational strata and the dampening effects of residential stability.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to existing theories, a range of personal factors influence the likelihood and speed with which a citizen develops a partisan orientation toward the political world. Evidence from Russia early during its transition toward multiparty democracy indicates that these pathways to partisanship are not all equal. Some attributes, such as interest in politics and educational attainment, strongly and directly dispose individuals to become partisans or to eschew such attachments. Other characteristics, like the pressures of group membership and one’s position in social networks, make only modest contributions or have indirect consequences for the development of partisanship. In taking stock of these relationships, we open a window into how Russian citizens are adapting to electoral democracy and obtain a grassroots view of the prospects for stability in the Russian party system.

The potential insights extend beyond Russia, however, to both old and new democracies. This study indeed speaks clearly to a decades-old tension between theory and evidence on party identification in the U.S. Economic and psychological theories propose that partisanship is a judgmental shortcut that eases electoral choices in the face of low motivation and capacity to become fully informed. However, these

perspectives run afoul of a mountain of evidence showing that the most involved and knowledgeable citizens are the strongest partisans. Our findings suggest that the tension may be partially resolved by distinguishing between political interest and expertise, on the one hand, and cognitive capacity, on the other. Citizens who might best be described as motivated information-seekers are much more likely to acquire partisan orientations. Their propensity to follow, talk, and learn about politics equips them with the desire and ability to more quickly find their “home” in the evolving multiparty universe and to settle there. In other words, at similar levels of interest and expertise, education appears to curb the need or taste for a partisan outlook. These results lend weight to a separation between motivation and capacity recommended long ago by Shively (1979) in predicting which American and British voters acquire or strengthen partisanship over short-term periods. Our evidence not only supports this distinction, but also implies that interest, awareness, and education are the most salient set of factors shaping the development of partisanship in Russia.

This last point invokes another long-standing debate as to whether party identification is principally grounded in the “symbolic politics” of group memberships or in rational information processes. When two broad perspectives on social behavior are opposed, we should not be surprised to find some support for each view and, indeed, we do. Using a novel technique for measuring the extent to which individuals are cross-pressured by their social position, we turn up evidence that cross-pressures retard the development of partisanship. The results appear to confirm one of the earliest propositions about the sources of partisanship (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). Even so, the modest impact of group pressures in Russia, especially relative to other factors, encourages caution in using a social-structural framework as the primary lens through which to understand the origins of partisanship.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps, as numerous observers of Russia’s transition have implied, the legacy of the Soviet Union and its collapse have left the electorate without strong social cleavages; yet, there is evidence that such cleavages exist and shape the voting behavior of Russians (Miller and Klobucar 2000; Whitefield and Evans 1998). Our analysis points to a sizeable role for social pressures, which nevertheless occupy a secondary status next to motivational-informational processes in explaining who shows signs of partisanship.

Our findings on the impact of exposure to campaign communications and placement in social networks further highlights the potential contribution of informational processes. Individuals who encounter and consume the most election-related material display stronger indications of partisanship. These results fit with the conclusions of Miller and colleagues (2000), who find the process of forming particular party attachments in Russia to be more deliberative than previous theories had intimated. We find that one's place in society has modest and largely indirect consequences for partisanship by influencing exposure, motivation, and expertise. Citizens heavily steeped in networks – those who are socially active, members of trade unions or civic organizations, residents of the capital city, and members of the ethnic majority – are more likely to become partisan.

Two key findings concerning the act of voting help complete the picture. First, citizens who believe in the efficacy of voting exhibit higher levels of partisanship. Second, the experience of voting strengthens partisan orientations. This pattern fits with the psychological notion that acting on beliefs crystallizes underlying attitudes and Converse's (1969) view of partisanship strengthening over the life-cycle.

Whereas most of our findings are consistent with general relationships we expect to work similarly in any democracy, some results are likely to be contingent on the social and political context. First, we find that former membership in the old ruling party predicts higher levels of self-identification, especially with the successor party. Second, attitudes toward the central political leader of the transition, Boris Yeltsin, influence the degree of partisanship in a way that mirrors his own attitude toward parties. Yeltsin eschewed a party affiliation and invested nothing in party development; likewise, his admirers show far fewer indications of partisanship than his detractors. Third, similar to the U.S., older Russians are more partisan. Unlike the U.S., this cannot be in accordance with the life-cycle effects posited by Converse (1969), but instead seems to stem from generational differences that spur greater partisanship only for the communist successor party, as well as from indirect age differences in the motivational and informational factors mentioned previously. The meanings of these three significant relationships are located in the transitional realities of Russian politics, yet the relationships are indicative of the kinds of factors that we might expect to accelerate or impede the development of partisanship in any new democracy.

For better and worse, Russians are acquiring partisanship in ways largely consistent with the many theories and limited evidence from established democracies. One exception may be the relatively weak influence of social pressures. Given the apparently small impact of group-party ties, the impressive rise in partisanship documented through the 1990s (Colton 2000a; Miller et al. 2000) owes a great deal to the fact that personal dispositions may play a more substantial role than previously thought. Less than four years into their new democracy, Russians who were motivated by their interest in politics and civic attitudes, consumed political information, were knowledgeable about politics, and had accumulated experience at the polls were very likely to show signs of a partisan frame of mind. That these factors appear to be most critical may also render the process more rational and thoughtful than many expected.

In general, tracking the emergence of party identification in Russia and other new democracies into the future promises to greatly improve our understanding of mass political behavior in all democracies. With this study, we have taken a significant step forward by testing many theoretical expectations about the origins of partisanship on citizens who could be observed shortly after they set out on the road to party identification. In doing so, we have exercised caution by relying on multiple indicators of partisanship in drawing our conclusions. We also have tried to be conservative in claims about the magnitude of particular effects by focusing on differences in attributes and attitudes that are not uncommon in Russia. Having taken this step, the goal of future research must be to trace how the nascent partisanship visible in 1995 evolves (or not) toward the sort of fully-crystallized party identification seen in the U.S. and elsewhere, as years and even decades unfold in Russia. It may also be fruitful to broaden the focus, which here has been exclusively on personal factors, to how the efforts of party organizations and the behavior of the party elite also alter the strength and speed with which individuals acquire partisanship. Finally, comparative studies of new democracies can help us to determine what in the pathways to partisanship is country-specific and what is universal. The finding here that so many factors work in the way hypothesized by theories from established democracies bodes well for a more general theory of the development of mass partisanship.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview, consult Miller and Shanks (1996) or Dalton and Wattenberg (2000).

<sup>2</sup> Research on the formation of attachments to particular political parties occupies considerable attention elsewhere (Miller et al. 2000; Miller and Klobucar 2000; Whitefield and Evans 1998).

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that explanations for general partisanship and particular partisan identities are unrelated. Parties may generate distinct means by which citizens become partisans. Nonetheless, the attempt to explain why an individual identifies with the nationalist party and not the social democratic party needs to be distinguished from the attempt to explain why some nationalist or social democratic party voters are identifiers and others are not.

<sup>4</sup> Even though surveys from the middle and late 1990s reveal a rise in self-identification among Russians (Colton 2000b; Miller et al. 2000), results from our earlier analysis of these self-identifiers suggests caution in interpreting the measures (reference omitted). Russians who self-report a party attachment (at least by 1995 and 1996) do not fully fit the profile, attitudinally or behaviorally, of a “party identifier” as understood in the United States or other established democracies. As expression of a kind of support, we certainly take such self-reports to be an additional indicator of partisanship, which is how we treat it here.

<sup>5</sup> We address the somewhat unique case of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation below.

<sup>6</sup> A full test of the party activation hypothesis demands closer examination of the activities of Russian parties and demonstration of the link between party activities and the development of partisanship. This requires extensive data collection on the grassroots activities of parties beyond the scope of the present paper, which is focused on individual factors that affect the emergence of partisanship.

<sup>7</sup> This is partially consistent with Shively’s (1979) argument, because, unlike others, he distinguishes between motivation and education and predicts opposing effects on the formation of partisanship.

<sup>8</sup> One could also consider the relationship from the reverse perspective, namely that citizens who were *not* members of the CPSU may be more suspicious of parties in general than those who were members.

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<sup>9</sup> A multistage area-probability sample was drawn from the voting-age population, and selection of respondents within households followed the Kish procedure. Interviewers made three attempts to reach potential respondents and the response rate for the initial wave was 79.8%. Half of those not interviewed were refusals. All interviews were conducted in person. For a complete description of the data and survey procedures, see Colton (2000).

<sup>10</sup> For more on the elections, see Marsh (2002), Colton (2000b), or White, Rose, and McAllister (1997).

<sup>11</sup> Half of the representatives to the Russian parliament are elected from 225 single member districts, while the remaining half are elected by proportional representation (PR) with a 5% threshold from a single national list. The questions used to measure partisan stability refer only to the party-list vote.

<sup>12</sup> Although there are reasons to suspect non-voters are not developing partisanship, coding non-voters as non-partisans risks confounding the dependent variable with the decision to participate in the election.

<sup>13</sup> We chose the top eight parties in order to include as many parties as possible without diminishing too far the number of respondents available for the subsample. For the 1995 parliamentary election, the top eight parties accounted for 77.4% of vote in the survey sample.

<sup>14</sup> This battery includes age, sex, population density of residence (dummy variables for large cities and small or medium cities), education (dummy variables for college degree and for secondary school diploma), frequency of church attendance, dummy variables for Muslim faith and Russian ethnicity, dummy variable for unemployment or not working, and occupational dummy variables for work in an industrial sector, agriculture, education, military, or privately owned companies.

<sup>15</sup> For some variables in the analysis, students of established democracies would rightly be concerned that reciprocal causation is at work. However, the fact that partisanship is so recently acquired – indeed not yet fully crystallized – among Russians suggests that it has little capacity to influence general political dispositions. Having said this, we believe that even nascent partisanship can emerge simultaneously with attitudes such as policy opinions, and thus we do not attempt to explain partisanship with these factors.

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<sup>16</sup> Throughout the discussion of results, for most explanatory variables that can take on a wide range of values, we report the impact of a shift from the 20th to 80th percentile as a more realistic but still substantial change in individual circumstances. We report the impact of a maximum shift for dichotomous or other variables where such a difference is more intuitively meaningful. The reported effects are actual first differences in the predicted probabilities or expected values, not percentage changes relative to a base level (e.g., a change in probability from .20 to .30 is described as a .10 increase in the probability, rather than as a 50% increase). We generate all first differences via Monte Carlo simulation (2,000 simulations) using Clarify 2.0 software for Stata (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2001; see also King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000). First differences are calculated holding the remaining explanatory variables constant at the sample mean.

<sup>17</sup> Even though the estimated effect of education on stability falls short of statistical significance, we report its expected impact because a first difference prediction that incorporates the effect of the interaction term (*Education × Cross-Pressured*) is statistically significant at the  $p < .10$  level, holding cross-pressures constant at the sample mean.

<sup>18</sup> One might not attribute this relationship to Yeltsin, but rather to the structure of party competition, with reformist politicians fragmented into several parties and the opposition consolidated in the KPRF. In other words, pro-reform voters simply had to choose among more alternatives, while the anti-reform crowd had a clear choice. If this were true, then fragmentation should impede the development of partisanship among pro-reformers *and* leave pro-reform partisans distributed among more parties. This is not the case. Looking at respondents who show signs of partisan stability, only 47.1% of those who most strongly dislike Yeltsin support the KPRF. Similarly, 47.4% of those who are most adoring of Yeltsin support Our Home is Russia, the party most closely linked to the government. In fact, the opposition appears far from united at the mass level; four major parties – the Agrarian Party, the Congress of Russian Communities, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, and the KPRF – draw support disproportionately from Russians who report a feeling thermometer of 0 toward the president.

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<sup>19</sup> This finding is especially important in the Russian context, because it adds further evidence that the development of partisanship among Russians is not merely a story about devotees of the old Communist party migrating en masse to the appropriate post-communist party.

<sup>20</sup> As with age, we checked to see if these modest relationships between sex and partisanship hold generally or are driven by differential attraction to specific parties. Although there are a couple of parties preferred by one sex, the general relationship, small as it is, holds across most of the parties.

<sup>21</sup> Although other pathways for indirect effects may exist, for the sake of brevity and clarity, we focus only on these four variables, which we believe to be most important.

<sup>22</sup> The causal primacy of political engagement is based on decades of research in political science, psychology, and communication studies. People expose themselves principally to information about topics they find most interesting. This is not to say that exposure to new information or the learning of new facts never kindles further interest; reciprocal influence is possible. However, especially in politics, exposure and knowledge are primarily interest-driven (Converse 1962; Fiorina 1990; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944; Zaller 1992): Citizens tend to tune into political news, read campaign brochures, and attend rallies, because they are interested in politics, rather than vice versa.

<sup>23</sup> Past levels of engagement and awareness are likely to have influenced the decision to vote in preceding elections, making them precursors of voting experience. However, it is also possible that decisions to vote in earlier elections reinforced interest in politics and increased political expertise, making present levels an outcome of voting experience. For these reasons, we include prior voting experience simultaneously with the other variables only in the final “direct” model estimating partisanship.

<sup>24</sup> When included in a direct specification, these factors are washed out by the four mediating variables.

<sup>25</sup> This is true even in the case of stability of party preferences. Although the impact of education appears much larger in Figure 2, the *potential* impact of political engagement is greater and obscured in the figure by our decision to report more modest and realistic percentile shifts for quasi-continuous variables.

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<sup>26</sup> Among all the social characteristics we added in the second round of analysis, rural residence is the most likely to show signs of a direct relationship if included in specifications predicting partisanship.

<sup>27</sup> Of course, the relationship may be reciprocal to the extent that political ambition or a general attraction to public life influenced who became a member of the CPSU initially. However, the question of how one came to be formally involved in the governing party is a good deal more complicated for the old Soviet Union than it is in democratic societies, where an interest in politics is essentially a precondition for involvement in government (which, anyway, is not automatically comparable to membership in the ruling party of an authoritarian regime). Regardless, even if such reciprocity exists, former CPSU membership still serves as a proxy for being part of the elite political class from the previous regime.

<sup>28</sup> Aldrich's (1995) use of an informational-motivational logic to explain the origins of partisanship in the U.S. is more consistent with our findings than the social-structural approach of Lipset and Rokkan (1967).

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**TABLE 1. Hypothetical Voters in a Simple World:  
The Effect of Social Pressures on the Variance  
across Predicted Probabilities of Party Support**

	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
<b>Young</b>	Pr(Com) = .5	Pr(Com) = .1
	Pr(Dem) = .5	Pr(Dem) = .9
	Variance = low	Variance = high
<b>Old</b>	Pr(Com) = .9	Pr(Com) = .5
	Pr(Dem) = .1	Pr(Dem) = .5
	Variance = high	Variance = low

**TABLE 2. Direct Effects: Individual Determinants of the Development of Partisanship**

	Stability	Consistency <sub>INT</sub>	Consistency <sub>ID</sub>	Self-Identification
<b>SOCIAL SALIENCE</b>				
Cross-Pressured	0.782 (0.604)	0.003 (0.098)	0.059 (0.105)	0.315 (0.556)
Education × Cross-Pressured	-1.935** (0.957)	-0.062 (0.153)	-0.240 (0.163)	-1.422 (0.899)
<b>SOCIAL NETWORKS</b>				
Exposure to Information	-0.438 (0.272)	0.067 (0.043)	0.161*** (0.046)	1.073*** (0.249)
Residential Stability	-0.383** (0.169)	-0.037 (0.026)	-0.019 (0.028)	-0.156 (0.149)
<b>SOPHISTICATION</b>				
Political Engagement	1.010*** (0.299)	0.453*** (0.044)	0.377*** (0.047)	2.279*** (0.255)
Political Awareness	0.662** (0.278)	0.180*** (0.044)	0.179*** (0.047)	0.876*** (0.248)
Education	-0.466 (0.331)	-0.060 (0.054)	-0.122** (0.057)	-0.609** (0.316)
<b>CIVIC ORIENTATION</b>				
Efficacy of Voting	0.410** (0.177)	0.180*** (0.028)	0.231*** (0.030)	1.233*** (0.162)
View of Party Competition	-0.002 (0.199)	0.029 (0.032)	-0.028 (0.034)	-0.275 (0.184)
Motives for Party Support	0.123 (0.110)	0.007 (0.018)	-0.002 (0.019)	0.039 (0.101)
Affect toward Yeltsin	-0.483** (0.199)	-0.089*** (0.032)	-0.064* (0.041)	-0.292 (0.184)
Trust in Government	-0.440* (0.241)	0.006 (0.038)	-0.008 (0.041)	0.120 (0.219)
<b>CRYSTALLIZATION</b>				
Voting Experience	0.150 (0.154)	0.190*** (0.022)	0.088*** (0.024)	0.343*** (0.124)
Former CPSU Member	-0.084 (0.149)	-0.031 (0.025)	0.030 (0.027)	0.261* (0.152)
Age	-0.012 (0.282)	0.047 (0.043)	0.139*** (0.046)	0.944*** (0.251)
Male	0.199* (0.111)	-0.029* (0.018)	-0.027 (0.019)	-0.085 (0.101)
Constant	-0.369 (0.350)	-0.073 (0.054)	-0.087 (0.057)	-2.782 (0.317)
Improvement in % Predicted	6.1	–	–	15.2
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	–	0.18	0.15	–
N	1,721	2,445	2,445	2,427

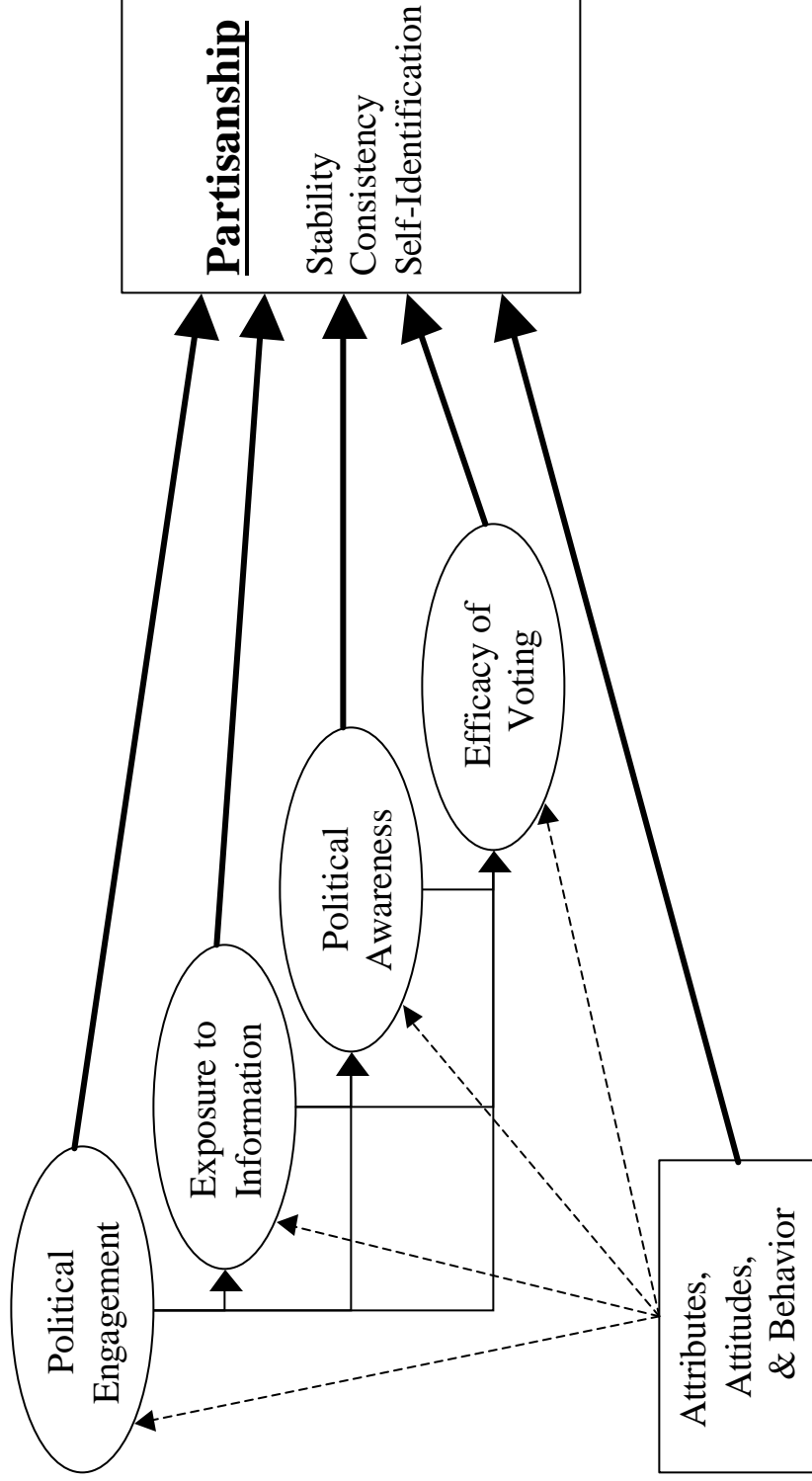
*Note:* Entries are coefficients (and standard errors) from maximum likelihood estimation of a logit model, for *Stability* and *Self-Identification*, and from ordinary least squares regression, for both measures of *Consistency*.  
\*\*\*p<.01, \*\*p<.05, \*p<.10

**TABLE 3. Indirect Effects: Determinants of Engagement, Exposure, Awareness, and Efficacy**

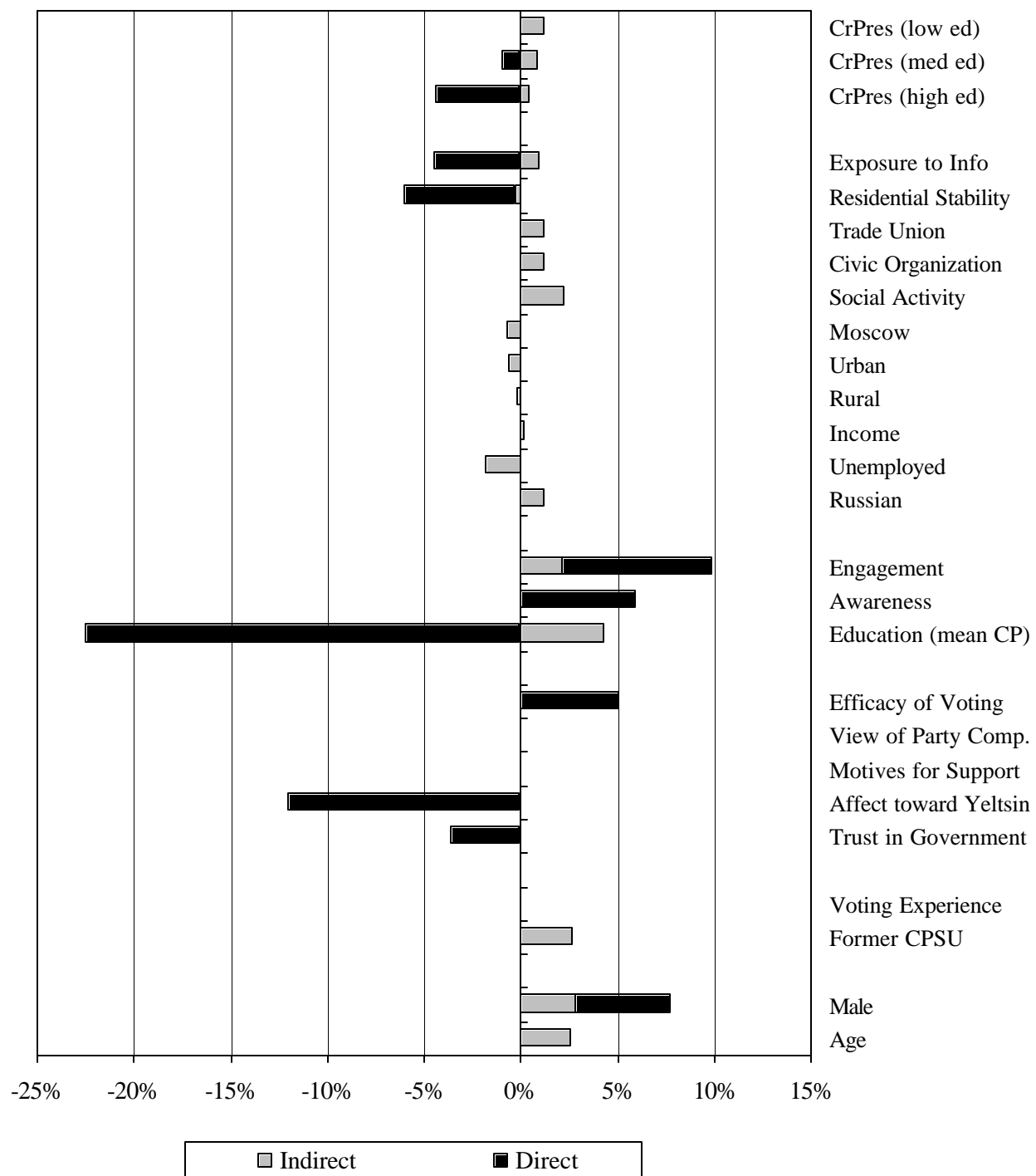
	Engagement	Exposure	Awareness	Efficacy
<b>SOCIAL SALIENCE</b>				
Cross-Pressured	0.203*** (0.051)	0.109** (0.045)	0.104** (0.047)	-0.084 (0.068)
Education × Cross-Pressured	-0.179** (0.079)	-0.071 (0.070)	0.018 (0.072)	-0.008 (0.106)
<b>SOCIAL NETWORKS</b>				
Exposure to Information	-	-	0.182*** (0.020)	-0.008 (0.030)
Trade Union Member	0.052*** (0.010)	0.029*** (0.009)	-	-
Civic Organization Member	0.053*** (0.019)	0.039** (0.017)	-	-
Social Activity	0.287*** (0.021)	-	-	-
Residential Stability	-0.026** (0.014)	-0.024** (0.012)	0.022* (0.012)	-0.032* (0.018)
Moscow	0.025 (0.017)	0.090*** (0.015)	-0.015 (0.016)	-0.033 (0.023)
Urban	-0.033*** (0.010)	0.001 (0.009)	0.018* (0.010)	-
Rural	0.008 (0.012)	-0.050*** (0.010)	-0.037*** (0.011)	-
Income	0.227* (0.131)	0.241** (0.116)	0.041 (0.120)	0.381** (0.175)
Unemployed	-0.058*** (0.011)	-0.003 (0.010)	-0.021** (0.009)	-
Russian	0.052*** (0.012)	0.033*** (0.011)	-0.012 (0.011)	-0.022 (0.017)
<b>SOPHISTICATION</b>				
Political Engagement	-	0.377*** (0.017)	0.328*** (0.019)	0.318*** (0.029)
Political Awareness	-	-	-	0.000 (0.029)
Education	0.100*** (0.028)	0.031 (0.024)	0.179*** (0.025)	0.012 (0.038)
<b>CRYSTALLIZATION</b>				
Former CPSU Member	0.087*** (0.013)	0.028*** (0.011)	0.031*** (0.012)	0.013 (0.018)
Age	0.235*** (0.024)	0.052*** (0.021)	-0.048** (0.022)	0.082*** (0.029)
Male	0.055*** (0.009)	0.012 (0.008)	0.085*** (0.008)	0.003 (0.012)
Constant	0.253 (0.029)	0.136 (0.024)	0.231 (0.024)	0.229 (0.036)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.21	0.27	0.39	0.07
N	2,586	2,648	2,647	2,623

Note: Entries are coefficients (and standard errors) from ordinary least squares regression. \*\*\*p<.01, \*\*p<.05, \*p<.10

**FIGURE 1. Direct and Indirect Effects on the Development of Partisanship**

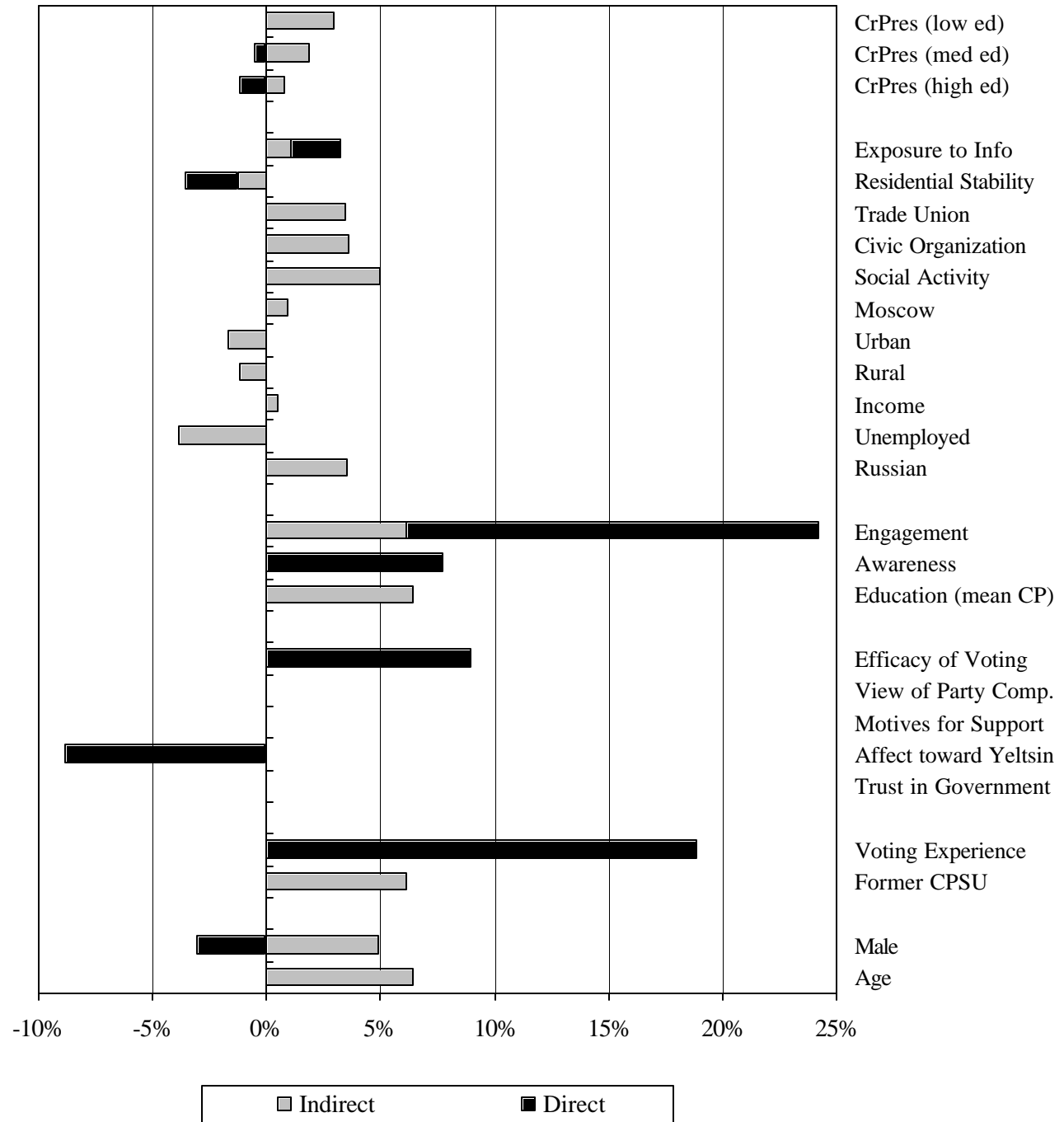


**FIGURE 2. Direct and Indirect Effects of Explanatory Factors on Stability of Party Preferences**



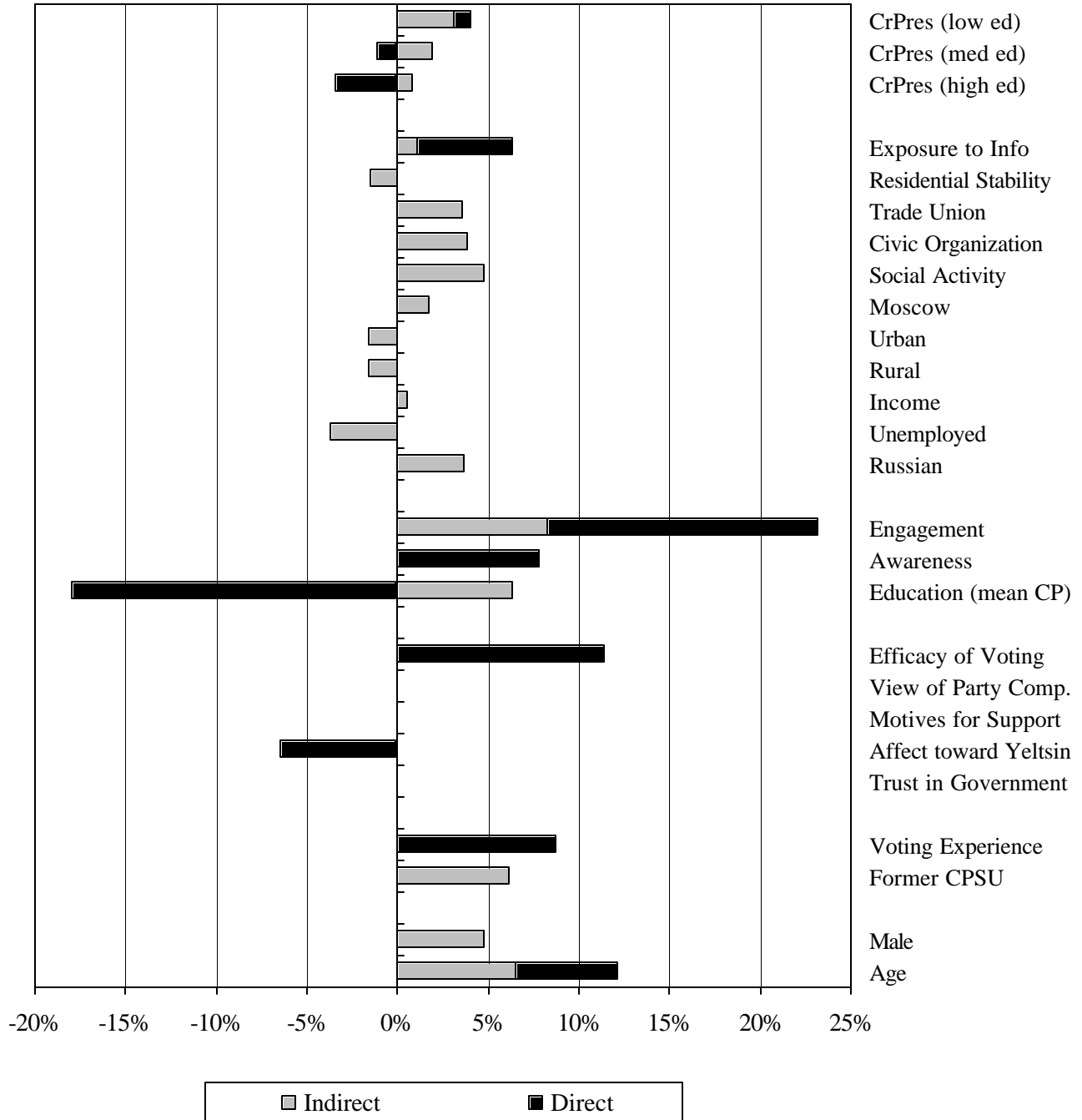
Note: Each value is the change in the predicted probability of displaying stable party preferences produced by a shift in the explanatory variable from the minimum to the maximum, except for the following variables, which shift from 20th to 80th percentile: cross-pressures, exposure to information, residential stability, social activity, income, engagement, awareness, efficacy of voting, view of party competition, trust in government, and age.

**FIGURE 3. Direct and Indirect Effects of Explanatory Factors on Consistency of Partisan Attitudes (Intention Base: *Consistency<sub>INT</sub>*)**



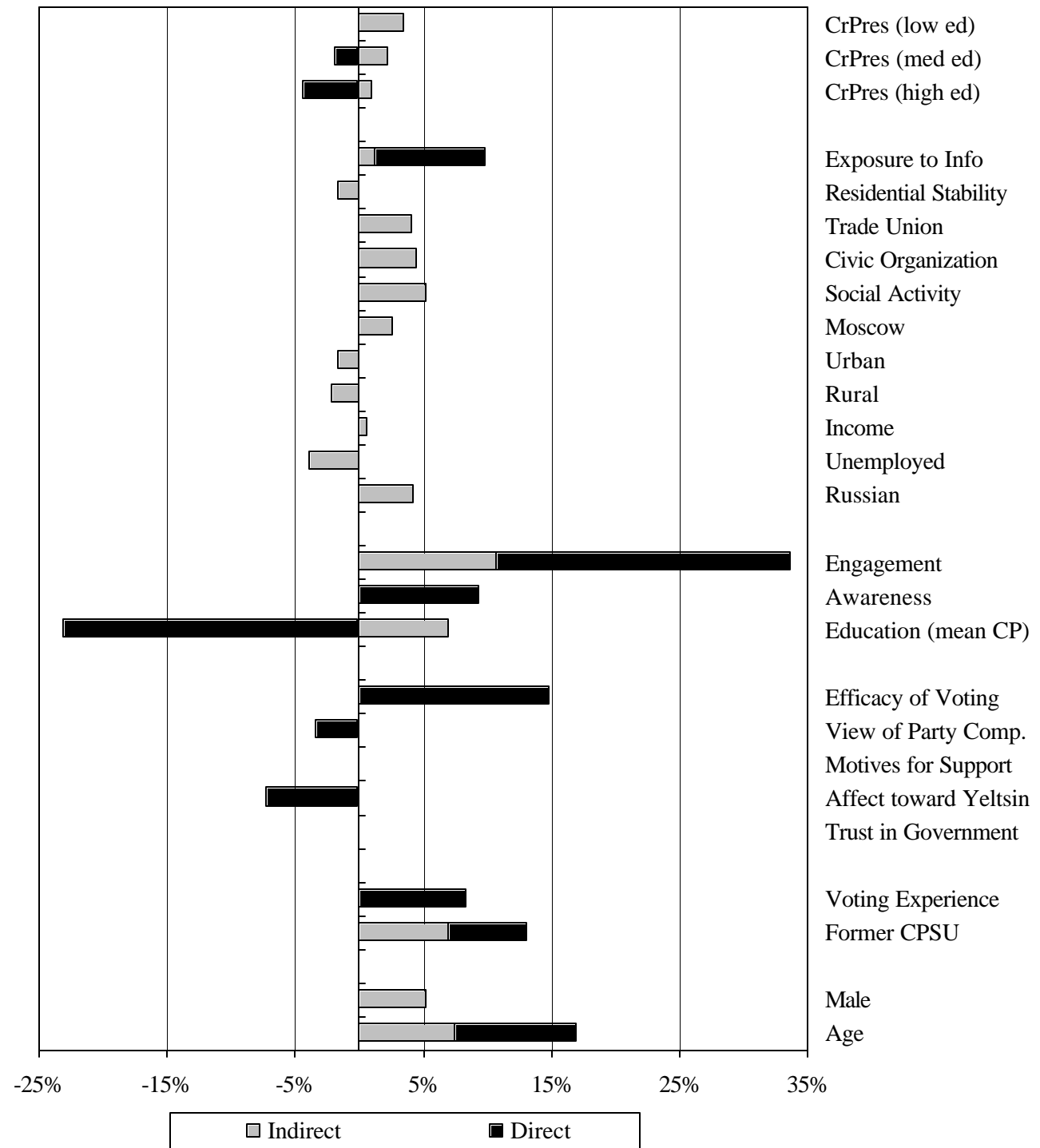
Note: Each value is the change in the expected value of the partisan consistency index (as a percentage of its range) produced by a shift in the explanatory variable from the minimum to the maximum, except for the following variables, which shift from 20th to 80th percentile: cross-pressures, exposure to information, residential stability, social activity, income, engagement, awareness, efficacy of voting, view of party competition, trust in government, and age.

**FIGURE 4. Direct and Indirect Effects of Explanatory Factors on Consistency of Partisan Attitudes (Identification Base: *Consistency<sub>ID</sub>*)**



Note: Each value is the change in the expected value of the partisan consistency index (as a percentage of its range) produced by a shift in the explanatory variable from the minimum to the maximum, except for the following variables, which shift from 20th to 80th percentile: cross-pressures, exposure to information, residential stability, social activity, income, engagement, awareness, efficacy of voting, view of party competition, trust in government, and age.

**FIGURE 5. Direct and Indirect Effects of Explanatory Factors on Partisan Self-Identification**



Note: Each value is the change in the predicted probability of self-identification produced by a shift in the explanatory variable from the minimum to the maximum, except for the following variables, which shift from 20th to 80th percentile: cross-pressures, exposure to information, residential stability, social activity, income, engagement, awareness, efficacy of voting, view of party competition, trust in government, and age.