

Demonstrations Indicate Russia's Political Progress

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Twenty years ago, the renowned University of Chicago political scientist Adam Przeworski formulated an empirical law that he dubbed the "threshold of democracy." He suggested that if the per capita income in a country reaches a certain level – \$13,500 at today's prices — democracy in that country would remain stable.

As the demonstrations against election fraud this month have shown, Russia might not have lapsed back into its former condition. Perhaps we are witnessing the "Przeworski principle" in action. Russia has developed too far, and the people are now too well off to tolerate rigged elections any more.

It is not that emerging middle-class Russians now want democracy in the same way that they gained a taste for pricey items. On the contrary, much of the Russian elite continue to hold the archaic view that democracy is a luxury, and that Russia's political path has no connection to the route followed by other countries.

The decade of growing personal incomes also witnessed increased efficiency at the workplace

and in everyday life. In both areas, people learned to make decisions better and faster than ever and to resolve increasingly complex challenges

There is a strong correlation between effectiveness in the workplace and time spent on the Internet. This is because the skills required for communicating on social networks are the same as those needed in the modern workplace: the ability to handle a constant flow of information rapidly.

The free and open channels of information that Russians demand today demonstrates that as society becomes more advanced, it requires more advanced tools and technologies. The same rule applies to the quality of decisions government authorities make.

This does not bode well for Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's political future. Putin's plummeting ratings are a sign not only that people are unhappy with some of his specific statements or actions. It shows that people are also dissatisfied with the quality of his governance as a whole.

When life in the workplace and the public sector reaches a certain level of complexity, a leader is needed who can provide the same degree of effectiveness in the state sector. Voters want competitive elections — not because they have been reading essays by former Czech Republic president and playwright Vaclav Havel, but because that is the most modern and effective method of governance.

Konstantin Sonin is a professor at the New Economic School in Moscow and a columnist for Vedomosti.

The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.

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