

Concepts:

“Managed democracy”- Putin’s modus operandi.

Yukos- an oil giant against whom Putin campaigned. This discouraged investment and led to capital flight.

Patrimonialism- the ruler treats his realm as property and not as a society.

Glasnost- openness.

“Law governed state”- the Communist Party is subordinate to the law.

Congress of People’s Deputies

Supreme Soviet

Politics in Russia: 1993 - 2010

- ❖ **Rebuilding Russia**
- ❖ **Current Policy Changes**
 - Putin must centralize in light of power shifting to economic magnates and regional bosses during privatization.
- ❖ **Historical Legacies**
 - The Tsarist Regime
 - Absolutism, patrimonialism, and Orthodox Christianity.
 - The Communist Revolution and the Soviet Order
 - Lenin and October Revolution overthrow the provisional government.
 - The Politburo was at the head. Stalin further centralized. Stalin left behind: personalistic rule, heavy reliance on secret police, and a militarized economy. Centralization led to inertia and bureaucratic immobilism. Officials looked out for their own interests instead of the public’s.
 - Mikhail Gorbachev, 1985. Emphasized less secretiveness in the government and economic pragmatism.
 - ⇒ He brought about the first elections for localized soviets in many decades.
 - ⇒ He legalized private business.
 - ⇒ Made concessions to the US in arms control.
 - ⇒ Called for “law governed state.”
 - ⇒ Eastern Europe fell as did the other satellites.
 - Political institutions of the Transition Period: Demise of USSR
 - 1990, Boris Yeltsin is elected as Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet under Gorbachev’s reforms.
 - Gorbachev agreed on a treaty making the union weak and giving economic autonomy to the republics. Before the vote, the putsch happened further diminishing his power.
 - Yeltsin outlawed the Communist Party making Gorbachev a president without a country. December 25, 1991 he formally stepped down.
 - Political Institutions of the Transition Period: Russia 1990-1993
 - The Republic created a Congress of People’s Deputies and Supreme Soviet.
 - Yeltsin appointed himself prime minister and formed a government with Westernizers. Yeltsin tried market reform and prices skyrocketed. Yeltsin asked for broad powers to carry out reform, but they wouldn’t give them.
 - Yeltsin dissolved the parliament in 1993 and dissidents barricaded themselves in parliament. A consensus was reached and Yeltsin emerged victorious, new elections were held. National elections were held for a legislature that did not exist since the constitution had not yet passed referendum.

Concepts:

Presidential decrees- have the force of law.

“Power Ministries”- overseen by the president they include the Foreign, Defense and Internal Affairs ministries.

FSB- former KGB, Federal Security Service.

Security Council- the heads of power ministries, the prime minister, the finance minister, and chairs of the two chambers in parliament has broad, but shadowy powers.

State council- comprises of the heads of regional governments. Allows the president to remain dominant.

❖ The Contemporary Order

➤ The Presidency

- The president is a powerful popularly elected to four years man (two terms). He names the prime minister. He can issue presidential decrees, which are not all powerful as they can be superseded by legislation or existing law.
- The government headed by the PM is concerned with economic and social policy.
- The president oversees ministries of coercion, law enforcement and security.
- In practice, the government answers to the president not the parliament.
- All bills must pass in parliament.
- The State Duma must approve prime ministerial appointments.
- The Duma can deny confidence in a government, if it carries twice the president dissolves parliament or dismisses the government.
- Formal powers- Head of State, guarantor of the constitution, commander-in-chief.
- Informal- manages relations with parliament, the courts, big business, the media, political parties, and interest groups.
- Chairs the Security Council. State Council advises the president.

➤ The Government

- Most members of government are career managers and administrators not party politicians. The government is not a party government. The president tries to balance personal loyalty, professional competence and strength of major factions.

➤ The Parliament

- Bicameral Federal Assembly. Lower house- State Duma. Upper house- Federation Council (instrument of federalism).
- State Duma- combines single-member district representation and party-list proportional representation. Party factions dominate.
- Federation Council- represents Russia's 89 federal regions on an equal basis. Avoids forming partisan groups.
- Under Yeltsin, the Federal Assembly had some power. Under Putin's dominance, it has become a rubberstamp. The constitution allows for a strong parliament, only time will tell.
- If legislation passes the Duma, the Federation council can approve it, reject it, or call for consensus. If the Duma opposes the Federation Council they can 2/3 override to send the bill directly to the president.
- The president can pass it or send it back to parliament. Then they can amend it or override.

Concepts:

Single-member districts- first-past the post, plurality for election to Duma.

United Russia- pro-Putin party holds about 2/3 of the seats and many others join their faction in the Duma.

Constitutional Court- Judicial Review.

Governors- regional chief executives. Formally popularly elected, now appointed by the president. Many supported the president.

Putin- centralization, lessening of ethnic minorities' representation via regional merging.

- Half of the Duma is elected by single member districts. The rest are elected on party lists. It is proportional if the party receives at least five percent. Parties that receive less, their votes go to winning parties.
- Factions are common and leaders of the factions are represented in the Council of the Duma.
- All bills are sent to pertinent committees headed by deputies to propose amendments before voting.
- The Federation Council approves presidential nominees for high courts, it must approve decrees of martial law or a state of emergency, it considers all legislation dealing with taxes, budget, financial policy, treaties, customs, and war declaration.
 - ⇒ Until a 2000 Putin reform, its members were heads of executive and legislative branches of constituent territories. Now regional governors and legislators name a representative to the Council to serve on a full-time basis.
- Executive-Legislative Regulations
 - The Yeltsin years saw the president at odds with a leftist assembly. With Putin's overwhelming majority, the power has shifted from the parliament to the president.
- The Constitutional Court
 - 19 members nominated by the president and confirmed by the Federation Council.
 - Determines constitutionality of president, parliament, and lower level governments.
 - Court has tended to uphold federal law over regional.
- **Central Government and the Regions**
- Under Yeltsin central government granted wide autonomy to regional government. Under Putin- centralization.
- There are six different types of regional units
 - 21 republics.
 - 6 *krais* (territories)
 - 10 autonomous districts (located within other units)
 - 1 autonomous *oblast*
 - 49 *oblasts*
 - 2 cities
- Republics, autonomous districts, and the one autonomous oblast are created to represent ethnic minorities.
- Oblasts and krais are administrative subdivisions.
- Putin has moved toward merging smaller subunits. Minorities will lose representation.
- The ethnic republics guard their special status. Chechnya still fights for independence whereas the oil-rich Tatar republic came to an agreement. Many republics have their own residents who act as dictators.

Concepts:

“delegative democracy”- political scientist Guillermo O’Donnell. This is a Latin American characteristic of presidents. The president wins an election and then exercises power as if he was the sole source of authority and power.

Oligarchs- media, industrial and financial bosses who had significant influence in Yeltsin’s weak administration.

“Near abroad”- the term used for former republics.

Social capital- reciprocal bonds of trust and obligation among citizens that facilitate collective action.

- The president created seven federal districts, which he appoints in 2000 to oversee the regional governments and maintain federal power.
- Local governments have very little power and receive most of their funds from regional governments.

❖ **Russian Political Culture in the Post-Soviet Period**

- Many are nostalgic for the USSR and favor state ownership of major industries. Yeltsin’s democracy saw a rise in unemployment and poverty as a small class of elite amassed fortunes during privatization.
- Russian’s think the leaders are rent-seekers (except Putin).
- The population sees Putin’s work to raise living standards as the most important. They associate Putin with democracy and undoing the ills of Yeltsin and early democracy.
- Political Socialization
 - In the past loyalty to the state was loyalty to Marxism and the Communist party. Now children learn to love Russia in a nationalistic way not a worldwide workers revolution way.
 - There is a neo-imperial sense as Russian desire to reunite with former republics and strengthen the Commonwealth of Independent States.

❖ **Political Participation**

- The Importance of Social Capital
 - In Russia, social capital is lacking relative to the West.
 - The State and Society are separate. The people do not actively participate in government (besides elections). The majority of the population does not participate in public associations.
 - Russians prize their right not to participate in a government that they have low confidence in and believe they have no influence over.
 - The reforms of Gorbachev saw a surge in participation that subsided with disillusionment with democracy.
- Elite Recruitment
 - *Nomenklatura*- elite recruitment in the Soviet era was prevalent.
 - With reform, the Communist Party’s influence over society disintegrated and the old ruling elites adapted and stayed in power.
 - The contemporary elite is a mixture of those who worked their way up through state bureaucracy and those who made their way through elective office or business.
 - Putin is bringing some of this back through schools aimed at training political leaders. He draws heavily from the police and military.
 - Communist groups used their assets to take advantage of the reforms. The Communist Youth League set up lucrative business ventures with its state funds.
 - Young scientist and mathematicians business elites emerged outside of the state.

Concepts:

Nomenklatura-the Soviet system for recruiting, training, and appointing individuals for positions of leadership and responsibility.

Open Russia-one of Khodorkovsky's charitable initiatives.

Yukos- oil firm headed by Mikhail Khodorkovsky. He amassed it during privatization easily by utilizing a bank he controlled called Menatep.

Wage arrears-workers receiving their wages late. This led to strikes especially with teachers.

- Businesses need licenses, permits, contracts etc. so they are tied closely to government.
⇒ Political officials receive campaign money.

❖ **Interest Articulation: Between Statism and Pluralism**

- The statist model was upset by glasnost. Glasnost initiated a wave of informal, unlicensed uncontrolled public associations.
- More pluralist than corporatist. Most interest associations are too weak, numerous and competitive to centralize for corporatism.
- The Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RUIE)
 - This represents big business in Russia. It consist of newly privatized firms and oligarchical conglomerates. It is the most powerful group in Russia.
 - It works with the government in drafting legislation on issues like tax reform, pension policy, energy, railroad monopolies, and the terms of Russia's entry into the WTO.
 - The RUIE knows its place as it stood down when Putin took down *Yukos*.
⇒ *Yukos* grew to a huge company under Khodorkovsky. He began to engage in talks with the Chinese about a pipeline and it planned to horizontally integrate. Khodorkovsky did not consult the Kremlin.
⇒ Putin attacked the company by chargin the heads of it with criminal charges. Khodorkovsky was arrested on fraud and tax evasion. Putin seized part of the company, sold it to an obscure company and then the state owned Rosneft bought it.
- The League of Committees of Soldiers' Mothers
 - It began to bring back student deferments, Gorbachev restored them.
 - It advises on how to avoid conscription and is active in protecting soldiers during the Chechen conflict.
 - The movement's greatest asset is its moral authority, which makes it hard to attack politically.
 - It combines political goals with service to clients (soldiers and their families).
- The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
 - It is the successor of the Soviet official trade union. It is fragmented, weak, and unable to mobilize collective action. Unlike the RUIE it did not adapt well to the post-Communist regime.
 - The FITUR inherited valuable assets but decentralization ahs parceled it off.
 - Much of its effort is expended on fighting other independent unions to win a monopoly on representing workers in collective bargaining rather than joining the unions to defend the interests of workers.
- New Sectors of Interest

Concepts:

Patronage-
delivery of
particularistic
benefits to
favored client
groups.

Party of power-
patronage
parties with
strong official
sponsorship.

Russia's Choice-
Yeltsin's pro-
reform
democratic
party.

"Rose garden
campaign"-
Putin preferred
to be seen going
about
presidential
duties rather
than going out
and garnering
for support.

- During the Yeltsin time, bribery was the best form of articulation. Under Putin's centralization, the impact of groups is dependent on presidential goodwill.

❖ **Parties and the Aggregation of Interests**

- Russia is organized around patronage rather than programmatic goals.
- The parties that developed in the beginning democratic, communist and nationalistic still exist today.
- Voters see parties of power as stable. For officeholders it is a vehicle for career advancement. United Russia is a *party of power*.
- Russia's presidential system encourages the president to avoid committing to parties; therefore, elections are based upon personalities and not policy programs.
- Elections and Party Development
 - *The 1989 and 1990 Elections*
 - ⇒ Democrats formed a legislative caucus called the USSR Congress of People's Deputies to help democratic candidates run for Russian Congress.
 - ⇒ Democrats competed for influence with communists, nationalists and agrarians.
 - *The 1993 and 1995 Elections*
 - ⇒ 1993, the pro-reform, pro-Yeltsin party, Russia's Choice did poorly. The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) did unexpectedly well. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation got 10% of the seats. Yeltsin had a narrow majority.
 - ⇒ 1995, 43 parties competed only 4 made the 5% threshold. Communists, Zhirinovskiy's LDPR, the "Our Home Is Russia" bloc formed around Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and the Yabloko Party (democratic). Communists were the most successful 30%.
 - *The 1996 Presidential Election*
 - ⇒ Yeltsin convinced voters in the election that it was either him or a return to communism. He defeated communist rival Gennadii Ziuganov. Yeltsin had heart surgery and bad health in 2nd term.
 - *The 1999 Election*
 - ⇒ Federal and regional officeholders wanted to rally around a party of power to protect their interests. Kremlin strategists created the Unity party to serve as a political vehicle for Vladimir Putin. Putin was named prime minister and successor to Yeltsin. Chechen rebels stirred conflict and Putin crushed it, gaining popularity. 23% vote.
 - *Putin and the 2000 Presidential Race*
 - ⇒ With Yeltsin's early resignation the PM Putin constitutionally became president before elections were held.
 - *The 2003 and 2004 Elections*
 - ⇒ The communist versus democrats ideological divide disappeared under Putin. The Unity Party merged with rival party of power Fatherland and became United Russia. The 2003 parliamentary

Concepts:

Shock therapy-
stabilization or
structural
adjustment.

Refers to
austerity
measures where
a balance is
sought between
society
consumption
and production.

*Loans for
shares-* the
government sold
shares of its
companies for
loans. The
government
defaulted on
most loans so
the banks that
lent them run by
oligarchs got
companies for
nothing.

*Pravovoe
gosudarstvo-*
law-governed
state. Not a
state controlled
by a lawless
party. Law over
politics.

election went very well for United Russia. Democrats and communists did poorly. 2004 presidential election was a landslide.
⇒ European observers commented that elections noticed that the president's control of the media was unfair.

➤ Party Strategies and Social Bases of Party Support

- Communists depend on old, poor and dumb voters. United Russia has a broad support base. Nationalists have no base, as Putin is associated with a strong state and continuity with the past. Women support United Russia's stability and continuity.
- Democratic parties Yabloko and Union of Rightist Forces failed to get the five percent as they competed against one another now they are contemplating a merger.

➤ Toward Consolidation of the Party System?

- Strong presidentialism undermines the ability of parties to promise that electoral success will translate into policy influence.

❖ The Politics of Economic Reform

➤ The Dual Transition

▪ *Stabilization*

- ⇒ Requires fiscal and monetary discipline. It gives the currency real value by cutting spending, raising taxes, lifting price controls and ending protectionism. Short run- standard of living decline.
- ⇒ Officials acquired ownership rights to monopoly enterprises and state officials collected fees to issue licenses.

▪ *From Communism to Capitalism*

- ⇒ Many local governments were entirely dependent on a single large employer under the Soviet system. The program began on January 2, 1992. The economy fell apart, IMF loans with strings attached including cutting spending and more taxes.

▪ *Privatization*

- ⇒ They had wider public support than shock therapy. Every Russian citizen received a voucher to buy and sell other vouchers or stock in private companies. The government hoped to instill property rights and increases in productivity.
- ⇒ Bank owning oligarchs reaped the benefits of the privatization of nationalized industries.
- ⇒ The government in 1995 auctioned off shares of companies for loans to the government.

▪ *Consequences of Privatization*

- ⇒ Many private firms were still tied to the state through subsidized loans, credits and contracts. Productivity thus suffered.
- ⇒ Lack of regulation led to a lot of schemes and public disillusionment as they lost their life savings.

Concepts:

Procuracy- most prestigious branch of the legal system.

Judiciary- relatively weak. Supreme Court is the ultimate appellate and issues instructions to lower courts.

Commercial courts- hear civil disputes between firms or firms and government. The Supreme Commercial Court is the highest appellate court and source of instruction for lower courts.

Ministry of Justice- oversees the court system. Provides material and administrative needs. Limited influence as it lacks authority over procuracy.

- ⇒ Lack of liquidity led to overdue wage and tax payments. Barter was used widely. Government went further into debt as it defaulted on loans and interest rates went up.
- ⇒ August 1998, the government declared a moratorium on its debts. Led to devaluation of the currency, and lower living standards.
- ⇒ Russia is heavily dependent on natural resource exports. Oil and gas make up half of Russian exports. Putin pledges to keep the economy on track. The Yukos affair does not help investor confidence.

- *Social Conditions*

- ⇒ Unemployment, lagging income, nonpayment of wages and pensions. Women the worse affected. 20% of the population lives in poverty.
- ⇒ Those paid by the state by pensions, as well as teachers, scientists, and health care workers pay does not keep up with prices.

❖ **Rule Adjudication: Toward the Rule of Law**

➤ The Law-Governed State

- Primacy of law over politics. Putin has increased presidential control over the judiciary.
- *The Procuracy*
 - ⇒ Like federal and state attorneys-general in the US. It is organized in a hierarchy with the Procurator-General as the head.
 - ⇒ Fights crime, corruption, and abuses of power in the bureaucracy. Principle check on power abuses by state officials.
 - ⇒ Inadequately equipped to oversee vast bureaucracy.
- *The Judiciary*
 - ⇒ Low pay and high caseload. Putin has reformed the judiciary by instituting trial by jury. Procuracy opposes for it is expensive and harder to present a case. It is good for it sets the two parties on equal footing with the judge as neutral arbiter.
 - ⇒ Russian judiciary is a unitary hierarchy with different levels and appeals processes. The Supreme Court is the ultimate authority, but no in reference to constitutionality of laws.
 - ⇒ Supreme (Commercial) Court judges are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Federative Council.
- *The Bar*
 - ⇒ Legal profession is expanding; criminal defense is appealing in the new market economy.
- *Constitutional Adjudication*
 - ⇒ Has ruled on ambiguous parliamentary procedure, overturned laws in national republics within Russia, and struck down restrictions on rights in the Russian Criminal Code.
 - ⇒ The Court tends to rule in favor of individuals and upholds the sovereignty of the federal constitution over regional governments.
 - ⇒ The court had been reluctant to challenge the president.

Concepts:*FSM-KGB*

Television
companies-
NTV and TV-6
lost
independence.

Corruption
rampant

Russia seeking
further
integration
amidst
conflicting
domestic policy

⇒ Court ruled that Yeltsin could not refuse to sign a law after a Duma override. The court is sensitive to the times and realizes it should not make a statement against Putin's authoritarianism that may reduce their legitimacy in the future.

➤ Obstacles to the Rule of Law

- Abuse of legal institutions by political authorities and corruption. Most FSB officials are Soviet era KGB men. The security police are regarded as professionally competent and uncorrupted. They still are quite intrusive.
- Two relatively autonomous national television companies NTV and TV-6 lost political independence and a respected liberal newspaper was shutdown due to government criticism.
- *Corruption*
 - ⇒ Largest sectors for bribes are health care, education, courts, and automobile inspections.
 - ⇒ 82% of businesses engage in government bribes for contracts, licensing, taxation and regulation.

❖ **Russia and the International Community**

- Putin allies with the United States against radical Islam.