

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

The Cult of Putin: The Impact of Putinocracy on Russia's Political Culture

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Martina Šumichrastová

Declaration of Originality

I declare that this bachelor thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature sources are attributed and cited in references.

Bratislava, 23 February 2016

Martina Šumichrastová

Signature: _____

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to provide an insight into today's political system of Russia, which is described by some as *Putinocracy*. It is interpreted as a mixture of a rule of one man, highly reminiscent of the old tsarist regime; autocratic rule of a strong hand accompanied by various features of democracy. Thus far, Putin has successfully applied the rule of one dominant party, United Russia, and with the on and off prime minister Medvedev, he holds in his hands much of the fate of the Russian Federation. With the capture of political institutions and the Orthodox Church firmly standing by his side, he has molded the traits on Russia's face since Yeltsin's resignation in 1999.

What makes this Putinocracy successful and sustainable regime? Is its popularity caused by the mentality of Russian citizens and their attitudes toward the political life and authorities? Or is it the run of the institutions under Putin's rule that shape the attitude of Russia's political culture?

The aim of this thesis is to show the attitude of the Russian citizens towards authority based on theoretical assumptions and practical findings that are progressively applied to current Russian situation. The three main chapters will describe the rise of Putin as the authoritative embodiment of the legitimate power, the institutional changes under his lead and at last, the political culture of Russian citizens. In conclusion, the purpose

of the thesis is summed up and points out the reasons why Putinocracy is successful in nowadays Russia.

Kult Putina: Dopad Putinokracie na politickú kultúru Ruska

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Abstrakt

Cieľom tejto práce je poskytnúť pohľad na dnešný politický systém v Rusku, ktorý môže byť opísaný, ako Západní a poniektorí Ruskí publicisti tvrdia je Putinokracia. Je interpretovaná ako zmes vlády jedného muža, pripomínajúceho starý cársky režim, vládu autokracie silnou rukou s rôznymi prvkami demokracie. Doposiaľ, Putin úspešne aplikoval vládu dominantnej strany, Spojeného Ruska, a s Medvedevom, striedajúcim post premiéra a prezidenta, jeho verným priateľom nielen v politickej sfére ale aj súkromnom živote, drží v rukách legitímnu moc a osud Ruskej Federácie. Spoločne s inštitúciami a Pravoslávnu Cirkvou stojac pevne po jeho boku, ovplyvnil vzhľad novodobého Ruska od rezignácie Jelčina v 1999. Je to čiastočne spôsobené mentalitou ruského obyvateľstva a ich postojmi voči politickému životu a autoritám ako je Putin alebo je to naopak, chod inštitúcií pod Putinokraciou, ktorá vytvára postoj Ruskej politickej kultúry? Cieľom tejto práce je ukázať postoj Ruských občanov k Putinokracii založený na teoretických poznatkoch, ktoré sú postupne aplikované na terajšiu situáciu v Rusku. Tri hlavné kapitoly budú opisovať vzostup Putina ako autoritatívne stelesnenie legitímnej moci, inštitúcií pod jeho nadvládou a v neposlednom rade, politickú kultúru Ruských občanov. Na koniec v závere zhrniem hlavné príčiny Putinokracie a jej úspech v dnešnom Rusku.

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Introduction

Laying the Foundations for Putinocracy

The aristocratic rule of the tsars had dominated history of Russia till the point where the February Revolution took place in 1917. The era of tsars and aristocratic rule was gone for good and was substituted by the Communist regime. Despite the fact that there was a chance of taking a different route than the communist one, presumably a democratic route thanks to the rising class of bourgeoisie in tsarist Russia, the odds turned out in favour for the communist regime until 1991. In the time when most of the Western world have enjoyed democratic rule, the newly formed Russian Federation went through the transition from the Soviet era. The Communist regime was finally over and the Russians warmly welcomed democracy and its perks. The Russian Federation had been slowly changing and adapting the essential principles of democracy, but the climax of changes has arrived with the first Putin's presidency.

With no doubts, Boris Yeltsin, the first democratic president of Russia, was immensely important political figure. Thus, he was no longer suitable to lead the nation thanks to several factors. Years of transition left a scar on his health conditions. 'Regardless of which critical episode one takes in the history of post-Soviet Russia, every single one demonstrates the destructive and anti-democratic character of the actions taken by Yeltsin and those in the circle that surrounded him, all of whom were deeply hostile to the interests of masses of Soviet working people' (Volkov, 2007). Step by step, Putin has tried to build a new beginning for the Russian citizens. At first, it was hard, but the fruit of his work appeared in following years. People were supportive of his decision-making. It was reflected in his popularity among the citizens. With no doubts there are ups and downs in a lifetime of everyone and political leaders are not an exception. Putin's popularity has been shifting the way democratic principles has been. Even after his first presidency ended, he remained a powerful and vital politician for the Russian Federation. Having a post of the Prime Minister during Medvedev's presidency was almost the same status as before. With Medvedev's support during Putin's presidency and prime-ministry alike, they have created a powerful political duo that is hard to tear apart.

Democracy under Putin's rule has transformed to a regime that is frequently referred to by commentators as *Putinocracy*. This term describes a system where most of the democratic principles, such as freedom of movement, press, and election, are present, but under Putin and the Kremlin's regulations. The vast majority of the Russians seems to go with the flow, thus they subscribe to democracy and its principles, yet they prefer the rule of a strong hand, paternalism and state embodied in a batyushka tsar-like central figure. What are the factors that have influenced the Russian citizens support for Putinocracy on a massive scale? Several factors have played out in the present day combination of political institutions and culture, which are going to be described in three main chapters.

Firstly, we need to focus on what makes people so attracted to the cult of Putin. The following questions will be asked and further answered in the first chapter. Is it his charisma (as Weber would point out), is it really the lasting legacy from the tsarist era, or is it ideology that make him so appealing to the citizens? Could Putin symbolise the old glory of an autocratic rule with the strong hand over its citizens? Secondly, the emphasis is put on the power Putin has on the institutional level. This will be described in the second chapter that shows the power distribution and how the State Duma operated, utilizing the analyses by Thomas F. Remington (2010) and Brian D. Taylor (2011), as well as Ivan Krastev (2011). Not to mention, the strong relationship between Putin and Medvedev will give us a hint as to why Putinocracy still has its place in the inner circles of the Federal Assembly. In addition, the annexation of Crimea will be studied on the model of war-making and state-making by Charles Tilly. Furthermore, various surveys are used to demonstrate attitudes of Russian citizens toward the power division, Putin himself, as well as on understanding the system they are all part of.

Last but not least, the third chapter addresses aspects of the Russian political culture that are based on the model by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba. It begins with the notion of democracy in the eyes of the Russian citizens, asking questions if they really *do need* democracy in the Russian Federation. Equally important is Putnam's operationalized concept of social capital (1993), adapted to Russian context. To demonstrate the perceptions of the Russians, various surveys from globally known World Values Survey to the Russian based Levada Centre will be used. Another approach is to show the importance of the Orthodox Church and its connection not only to the believers, but to Putin himself. The Orthodox Church is the most widespread religion in the Russian Federation. Its popularity has risen after the fall of

Communism and its impact on today's Russian culture as described by Pippa Norris (2011). Putin has successfully managed to gain support of the Orthodox Church in form of a growing friendship with patriarch Kirill. But there is a lot more to explore in these chapters. In the final analysis, conclusion will give us answers to many eager questions about the functioning and success of Putinocracy that had been set at the beginning of the thesis. Lastly, a few steps will be introduced to attempt to find possible ways out of the expanding Putinocracy and returning back to a more democratic route.

CHAPTER 1: The Rise of Putin

If it was a tsar, a dictator or a president, Russia has been always under powerful hands of various leaders. Some of them are remembered in history of the Great Mother Russia as weak, some of them were unforgettable and thanks to this memory of them, they had created a lasting legacy of a righteous leader. Despite the fact that Boris Yeltsin, the first president after the fall of Communism in Russia, is regarded as a weak political persona in Russian history, he contributed heavily to the birth of a new cult in Russia- the cult of Putin. His presidency can be described by many words but it would not involve democracy in it. In addition to what was mentioned in the introduction, Yeltsin imposed a new constitution in order to have a greater scale of power. So to say, his rule was based on presidential degrees that legitimatised his power (Volkov, 2007). What are the characteristics that Vladimir Putin has that give him a privilege to be such a versatile strong leader? Is it caused by the historical legacy of the tsars and traditions, or does he have a peculiar charisma that appeals to the Russian citizens? What makes the Cult of Putin so strong that the citizens' support is so natural, thus it gives breath to 'Putinocracy'? In order to reveal a mystery of Putin's charm, it is necessary to go deeper into key factors that shape such a leader as Putin is. These are traditions, that can be traced to the tsarist legacy, personality features with ideology and symbols of power continuity that also refer back to old Russian Empire.

1.1 Personality and Ideology

Personality is one of the key factors that determine if a leader is going to be supported by the public under his rule or not. Whether it is a tsar, a patriarch, or a president, all of them represent the embodiment of a certain type of authority that is, in practice, combined with his personality. As Randal Collins claims in his chapter *The Prediction of the Soviet Collapse* (Collins, 1999, pp. 61-63), personality is one of the keys to either succeed or fail for the charismatic leader. In order to understand these terms regarding the power, explanation of the terms is necessary and crucial. There is a large variety of perceptions of these authorities, however, the most appealing concept of the authority is offered by Max Weber in his work *Politics as a Vocation* (1946).

Not only does Weber propose the three ideal types of leaders, but he points out that the state and the citizens' relationship is an essential feature of power holding. Other perception of authority can be found in Plato's *Republic*.

1.2 Max Weber- Three types of legitimate rule

Max Weber introduced a sociological explanation of how a politician is formed and illustrates how some countries had evolved in his work *Politics as a Vocation*. Weber examines what power means before he gives an insight on the concept of politics, the state, and the leaders.

A state in his understanding is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Weber, 1946, p. 1).

Weber claims that the state, as well as political institutions, are depicted as a hierarchical relationship of superior men over other men. Legitimate exercise of power requires certain amount of force. However, there are various ways of upholding a legitimate rule. He explains them on the three ideal types of authority.

Traditional authority

This type of a legitimate rule is based on the rule of a patrimonial ruler or patriarch (Weber, 1946, p. 2). Nonetheless, Weber by patriarch does not mean 'patriarch' as the highest episcopal rank in the Orthodox Church, but as a leader of the state. It is based on the old but golden habits that applied to the rule from the early beginnings and that still work/ those that are based on well-established traditions and customs. Russian tsar is the embodiment of the traditional leader. People were used to have someone who is born with royal blood as their legitimate leader, someone who is above them and has the right to rule over them. Patrimonial rule in Russia is represented by the figure of 'batyushka tsar', which is a centuries- old political tradition, where the figure of the ruler is perceived as the 'father of the nation'. (Goscilo & Hashamova, 2010, pp. 8-9).

'The mythic pre-eminence of the "batyushka tsar"- his profoundly revered authoritarian stature, was entrenched in the Russian collective imagination...'

(Goscilo & Hashamova, 2010).

When the notion of the father is enrooted in the citizens, who would be brave enough to doubt the power given by hereditary tradition at the heart of the Holy Mother Russia when it worked perfectly for centuries?

Charismatic authority

Another significant type of a legitimate rule is represented by a charismatic ruler, to which Weber refers as to 'the authority of the extraordinary and personal gift of grace (charisma)' (Weber, 1946, p. 2). Weber illustrates this leader as a leader who reflects trustworthiness, something heroic that can be found exclusively in the charismatic leader who is characterized by leadership skills. Putin is a perfect example of this type of a leader. In Russia, he is being depicted as a hero in eyes of Russian citizens. His popularity escalated rapidly since Yeltsin's era. In January 2012, his popularity reached 58.8%, while in October 2015, it reached historical maximum of 89.9% (see Table 1). Even if Russian statistical figures are exaggerated, the trend of increased popularity is apparent in several polls. His popularity received another boost with the recent military involvement in Syria (Eremenko, 2015).

Table 1 Putin's Popularity Rate

<i>Year</i>	<i>January</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>October</i>
2012	58.80%	68.80%	61.10%
2013	64.40%	65.30%	62.10%
2014	60.60%	86.20%	88.90%
2015	86.60%	87.89%	89.90%

Note: Source: Press-vypusk No.2958, Reiting Putina, 2015

Authority by virtue of legality

The last type of authority Weber describes is the rule by virtue of legality. It means that the person who is in charge of the rule is elected, appointed by the people. He or she is given the competence based on certain written rules that are legally exercised. This type of domination is listed as a modern type of the rule. In other words, the leader is a servant of the modern state institution (Weber, 1946, p. 2).

These three types are purely ideal depictions of a leader, and rarely exist in a pure form. Putin can be described as a leader who combines the authority types, with charismatic type being predominant. As the three types of authority, political culture types are also defined on the ideal level. It means that they can be found in various mixtures of them in real life. Further examination of political culture will be explained in the second chapter.

1.3 Ideology

Besides personality, ideology is equally important in terms of explanation of Putin's success on the Russian political scene.

When Yeltsin appointed Putin as the Prime Minister, the Russian Federation was already on the route to democracy. In December 1999, Putin succeeded Boris Yeltsin when he resigned (Day, 2008). Putin has encountered two influential ideologies: socialism and capitalism. Putin seems to favour a kind of a mixed autocratic rule with democratic features to keep up with other world powers. More on Putin's political success and how he operates the federation on the institutional level will be examined in the second chapter.

Traditions of ruling power

Traditions are an essential part of Russian life. It strengthens legitimacy with the legacy of traditions successful throughout the centuries of the Russian existence as a state body with the ruling power. Since the era of tsars, traditions have always been a cultural heritage carried from one royal bloodline to the next generation. However, not each of them put such an emphasis on traditions of the rule of power as the tsar Alexander III and his son and successor Nicholas II. Together, they brought up two significant traditions that survived the era of suppressive Socialism. The tradition of the Orthodox Church rises in popularity since Putin's presidential years. Another tradition that is deeply rooted in Russia is the military tradition. It is a well-known fact that in Russia, there is a conscription for all healthy men. The military traditions have various appearances since the events that happened after the Revolution and during the Second World War (e.g. the Russian Military Parade held annually at the Red Square).

These traditions are traced back to the last tsars of the Russian Empire (and beyond). They asserted various traditions according to the way they were raised. Alexander III was a man of virtue, who tightly held the power he was given after assassination of his father Alexander II. He is a perfect example of the state power embodiment in the Russian history. Nonetheless,

he deeply cherished bonds with his family and was depicted as a sensitive man. He loved his family the way he loved his country. With the Orthodox Church and the military power by his side, traditions were another tool of the power.

‘...three sacred principles: autocracy, the rule of one man, tsar, whose legitimacy has a religious character’ (*Mitterrand, 2009, p. 107*).

Nicholas II was raised under strong military conditions that influenced him in his future decision making as the tsar. As well as military, the Orthodox Church played the crucial role in forming of the future tsar. Since his childhood, he greatly supported the idea of the Holy and eternal Russian Empire, Mother Russia, which was constructed under the influence of his father. Alexander III believed in three sacred principles. This legacy was supposed to be delivered to his son as simple and sacred as the principles are (*Mitterrand, 2009*). The great tsars represent a popular historical legacy, symbol of Russia’s power and greatness, which are still harkened to legitimize power and increase popularity of the current leaders.

1.4 Symbols of power continuity

Symbols of power continuity are present in various forms; thus Putin prefers symbols of patriotism such as a celebration of the Great Patriotic War to commemorate the heroic act of brave soldiers who were fighting for their homeland rather than the classic symbols of power continuity. However, they are an essential part of Russia’s political and cultural life and Russians proudly present, wear and display the tricolour, which was introduced by Boris Yeltsin, and the double-headed eagle (*Kurilla, 2009*).

In such a manner, the connection to power can be also found in the symbols of power that are inherited from the tsarist era, however, they underwent slight design changes throughout the time. Symbols are a way how to secure legitimate power with the legacy of the past. It shows that there is a continuity in the rule, that there are foundations on which a new strong state could follow what had already been set up. In this subchapter, the double-headed eagle, the emblem of the Russian Empire, is traced to its origins and the importance of traditional symbols is explained.

In the past, every royal or noble bloodline that meant something in the old world had some emblem. Proudly, those emblems were used in battles, to manifest, for example, whose army is on the way. Those iconic emblems went through several periods of adjustments and some of them stayed present even in Modern era.

‘A quest for a certain aesthetic led to this “heraldic” position, which can be explained by a natural inclination for symmetry and the likely religious nature of the entity represented. (Mollier, 2004).’

One of the iconic symbols of power is undoubtedly represented by the double-headed imperial eagle. The history of this symbol is traced back to Mesopotamia, approximately 6th century B.C, where the double-headed eagle has been depicted as a female body with two heads in one of the oldest cities, Ctal Hüyük (Mollier, 2004). Other depictions were more than the first attempts to illustrate a creature with two heads and wings widely spread (see Image 1).

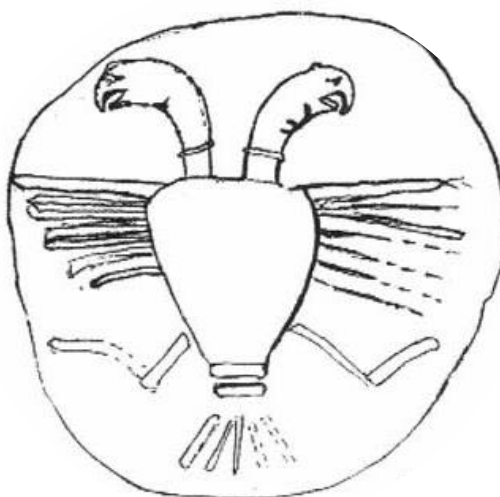


Image 1: Boghazköy seal

The double-headed eagle started to appear throughout the world in various forms and empires such as Seljuk, Turkmen and last but not least in the Byzantine Empire. Constantinople, as the capital of the Byzantine Empire, embraced the double-headed eagle as a symbol of power and

sovereignty that was carried on the coat of arms. It very likely arrived in Constantinople on the fabric and coins of a merchant or in the mementos belonging to a soldier (*Mollier, 2004*).

The inner decorations of the Russian Orthodox Churches trim with pulpits depict the double-headed eagles. The resemblance of the decoration can be found in the Quran stands of the Seljuk's.

The double-headed eagle has become a popular symbol in the art and symbolic circles that made it evolved from the common symbol to an imperial symbol. There is a probability that The Basileus Theodorus II Lascaris (1254-1258) was the first who made the double-headed eagle the symbol of the empire (*Mollier, 2004*). It does not only symbolise the two-fold sovereignty but far more, it gained the strong spiritual and temporal meaning. From that point, the Greek Orthodox Church had adopted the double-headed eagle as its official emblem. The Russian Empire, as well as other countries from the Balkans, were inspired promptly by the Byzantine eagle.



Image 2: The Coat of Arms of Russian Federation

During centuries, the old imperial eagle changed several times under different tsars and changing regimes. During the second half of the 19th century, prevailing colours were black and yellow, which were substituted by the velvet red (see Image 2). The last version of the coat of arms of Russia is illustrated with the golden double-headed eagle with a rider (some experts claim it is Peter the Great, some claim it is Saint George).

Each colour has its own meaning regarding the coat of arms. The coat of arms of Russian Federation was designed to have five colours

with domination of red and gold colours representing generosity and the military strength of the Russian Federation. In late December 2000, Putin confirmed the tricolour flag, the coat-of-arms with the double-headed eagle as Russia's state symbols (*Litvin, 2011, p. viii*).

CHAPTER 2: Institutions Under Putin

At first sight, the charismatic emanation of Putin would not be sufficient for preserving his power in the Russian Federation. To govern successfully, ruling power must have the command of political institutions. So which are the essential institutions that were needed to establish and preserve the cult of Putin and the hierarchical power that has aroused out of it?

Answers to these questions lay in the way how the state and its institutions, such as the State Duma, work under Putin's rule. In order to define how Putinocracy shapes the federation and the Russian society and how has it evolved, it is necessary to look into maintenance of the Duma by Kremlin. To begin, *The Concept of the Political* by Carl Schmitt will give us a notion about how state operates and what roles Putin represents within the state. Following, with an insight of Brian D. Taylor on the matter of state-building in the Russian Federation, we will focus on two essential elements of state-building, which are the state capacity and the state quality. Throughout the years, Putin has successfully built up a group of supporters in Duma and in other crucial positions (e.g. the security service) that are vital for smooth running of the state under his hands. The centralized power in Duma that is characterized by the dominant leadership of the United Russia and other parties, to the contrary being more or less reluctant in the political processes executed by this body.

As we will see in the first subchapter, Putin and the State Duma, description will be based on Remington and his model of the dominant party regime that has emerged in the State Duma. A thoughtful exploration of the relationship of Medvedev and Putin duo will serve us well. Focus of the following paragraphs will be on the current prime minister and former president Dmitri Medvedev and the division of power between him and his friend from Saint Petersburg, Vladimir Putin. In addition, for better understanding of how the institutions and the power execution work, a theoretical model of Charles Tilly, with the contribution of Theda Skocpol's work, comes handy to illustrate the importance of the interplay between institutions, the power and military issues mentioned in the first chapter. For this case study, annexation of Crimea would be an excellent example to which their model can be applied as a demonstration of the state-making through war-making and its impact on the institutions as the state itself.

2.1 Conception of State

To bring in the idea of a state, which is a form of institution, let's take a brief look at Carl Schmitt's concept of a state defined in his work *The Concept of the Political* (2007). Schmitt sees the modern state concept as something essential for the political. It is a part of the four distinguishing factors of notion of the political- morality, economy, political and aesthetics. Each of them has positive and negative sides. He puts an emphasis on distinction between friend or enemy. Schmitt asks various questions regarding friend-enemy relations and brings up a thought of an embodiment of the state with a political desire. He claims that only those who actively participate in political life can be the embodiment of this political desire and have the right to define who is friend or foe, what is profitable or unprofitable, what is bad or good based on principles of morality, and at last what is ugly or beautiful according to aesthetics. All of them depend on each other's adherence. The political entities thus decide on who is a friend or a foe.

'The state as the decisive political entity possesses an enormous power: the possibility of waging war and thereby publicly disposing of the lives of men' (Schmitt, 2007, p. 46).

With a strong emotional connection, with a shared feeling of threat, we become a society, we form a state with the participative leader. Therefore, the state is a mirror to its inner structure and people who has the right to decide on matters in political sphere.

2.2 State Capacity and State Quality: Putin begins institutional reformatations

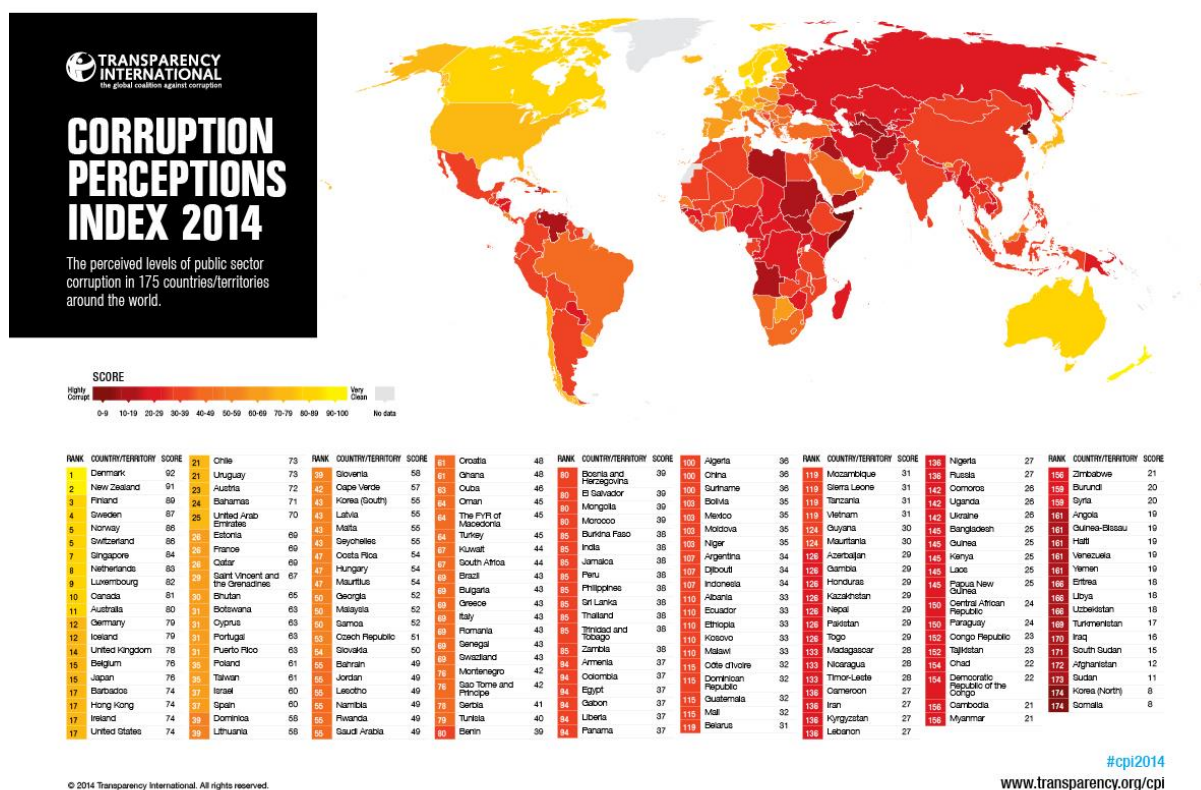
Putin started his New Year's speech in December 1999 with a brief illustration of what has happened and what are his upcoming plans for the federation during the following years.

'Russia is enclosing the first, transitional stage of economic and political reforms. Despite of all difficulties and mistakes, we are walking on the main path as the others are. Only this path as experience of the world strongly suggests, opens the real perspective of dynamic boost of economics and the living standards of the nation. There is no alternative to that' (Putin, 1999). Nevertheless, the state-building became his number one priority. His politics was introduced with new political approaches that should help in process of a state-building. One of the particular innovations is a creation of seven districts, which were introduced in order to impose centralized control over the executive bodies in the regions, including the law enforcement ones (Taylor, 2011, p. 22).

Despite the innovations brought by the first Putin's presidency, we have to look closer to a concept of state quality and state capacity (Taylor, 2011, p. 16). Taylor defines state capacity as 'the ability of a state to ensure the reliable implementation of its decisions by its own personnel' (Taylor, 2011, p. 16). Applied to the current situation in Russia, Putin is the symbolic embodiment of a state, so he also represents its capacity on account of the reliable implementation of decisions.

'By state quality I mean whether the state and its officials serve the interests of the population in a fair manner that promotes the general welfare' (Taylor, 2011, p. 17). Following paragraphs propose what it should look like in an ideal type of high quality states.

One of the aspect of it is that bureaucrats should operate fairly, doing their jobs with no temptations to make extra money on side. Putin administrations' attempts to fight corruption are, according to Transparency International survey for 2014, not sufficient (see Image 3). Ranked as 136th country out of 174, sharing the score 27 with another five countries is alarming in the eyes of state quality. More on corruption and its connection to political culture will be written in the third chapter.

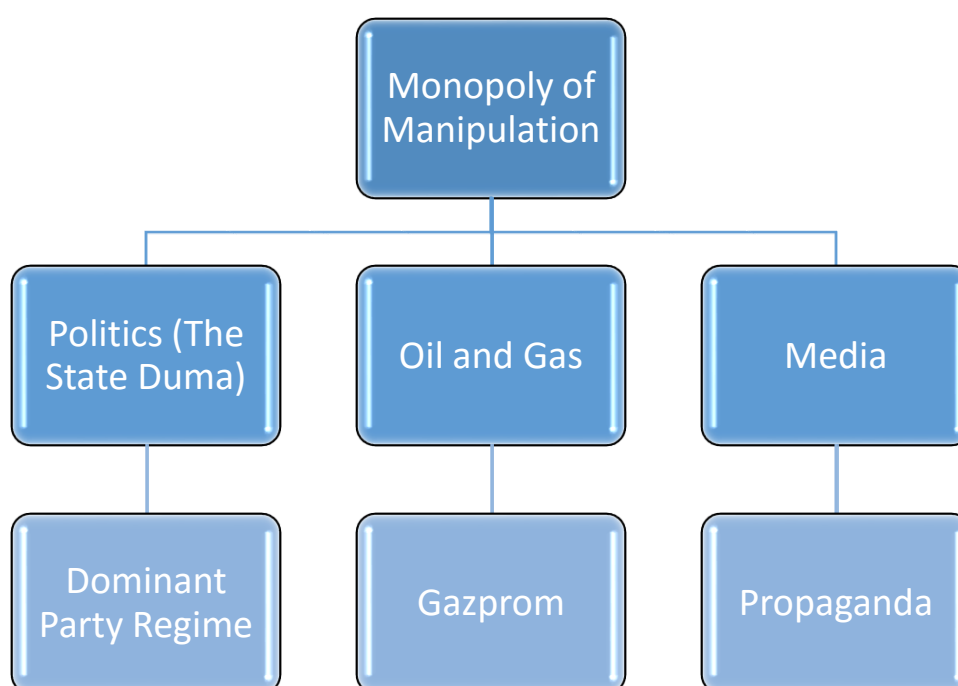


2.3 Putin and the Federal Assembly

The first State Duma was established by the tsar Nicholas II in 1906. After the fall of Communism, the revived Duma represents the lower chamber of the Federal Assembly. There are 450 seats, but Duma's electoral term has been changed from four to five years after the Constitutional amendments introduced in 2008. It takes effect after the Duma elections in 2011. From 2011, it is exclusively the president's duty and responsibility to call the next elections. Going back to the seats and Putin's innovations on the domestic level in politics, the seats are assigned from the party lists under a law adopted in 2005 (How the Duma Electoral System Works, 2015). As Putin claimed at the time of its making, 'it would strengthen the party system by reducing the number of parties in the Duma' (How the Duma Electoral System Works, 2015).

It can be clearly seen that the dominant party regime model is still prevailing in Russia with the regime's intentions on securing the position of the United Russia in the State Duma. Putin used to be a member of United Russia, and his power over the party, whether he is on the post of the prime minister or the president, is still strong. Thus, the monopoly of manipulation, which can be divided to three main parts (see Table 2), is mainly covered with operation of the Federal Assembly under the protective wings of the Kremlin. The rest of the table is going to be described throughout the thesis in different chapters.

Table 2 Tools of Manipulation



With a team, Putin created a configuration of power (the dominant party regime) through succession of skilful institutional manoeuvres (Remington, p. 40). However, there were steps that he needed to take in order to tame the Duma, which are elaborated in the following for points.

The process of making United Russia the dominant party was not that as easy as it may seem to be. It started by Putin and his elevation from the post of Federal Security Service director to the premiership, was not worried about electoral reform, focusing instead on party-building. The pro-Putin Unity bloc succeeded in the December 1999 parliamentary election, after which the presidential administration formed a coalition from two party caucuses (Unity and FAR, which flopped over to the government's side), and two groups of deputies (Regions of Russia and People's Deputy) (Stanovaya, 2013). In January 2000, president Putin managed to create a loyal majority among the Duma MPs. By this, he secured passage of any legislation he proposed. Moreover, in the third Duma (2000-2003), a pro-Putin fraction Unity formed in the parliament and allied with three other fractions, thus having a firm control over the agenda (Remington, p. 41).

At the same time, as the Duma was being under the control of Putin, he managed to remake the Federation Council, the upper chamber. Using quite a different tactic to gain power in the

Federation Council, its success in suppressing independent power and political opposition was inevitable. Putin established direct control over the upper chamber thanks to a reform of a method by which the members of the Federation Council are chosen. To secure the power even more, close cooperation between the Kremlin and the chamber is exercised through the weekly meetings. The functioning of the process goes as followed: The Kremlin's position on a pending legislation is communicated, and the chamber's position is worked out (Remington, p. 46) .

'... the Kremlin's influence is sufficient to ensure that members faithfully follow the president's line' (Remington, p. 46).

Another move Putin did in order to take over the power was on the regional level. By issuing various legislative acts that created difficulties for influential bodies such as oligarchs or governors, he ensures a close cooperation of the officials with the United Russia. These precautions ensured its victory in the 2003 and 2007 Duma elections. United Russia gained a two-thirds majority in the Duma (Remington, p. 41).

Lastly, Putin created a series of parallel parliaments, which are bodies that divert policy-making expertise and debate from the parliament to alternative arenas (Remington, p. 41). With such bodies, Putin decided to give them privilege to advise him on political matters (e.g. matters related to civil society). This means for the Federal Assembly that it loses its constitutional monopoly in form of legislation and executive supervision. It became more of a consultative body with a political display of presidential support. Between these parallel bodies are the State Council, which was formed in 2000 as a part of the reform of the upper chamber, the Public Chamber; established after the Beslan school siege in 2004. Likewise, other parallel institutions, the Security Council is a constitutional body which advises the president on national security matters but can be used to develop policy in a wide range of areas (Remington, p. 41).

2.3.1 The Relationship Between Putin and Medvedev

Transition sentence...

To begin with, Medvedev and Putin are close friends since they met in St. Petersburg in 1992. Among five influential Russians, Putin and Medvedev had been ranked on the first two leading positions (see Table 3).

Table 3 Five Most Influential Men in Russia

1. V. Putin	76 %
2. D. Medvedev	67 %
3. V. Zhirinovsky	16 %
4. S. Shoygu	9 %
5. G. Zyuganov	9 %

Note: Source: Levada Center (formerly VCIOM) surveys, 2-5 July 2010

They had been attending the same Faculty of Law of the Leningrad State University. The division of power is connected with Medvedev's posts during his career. Medvedev used to be commonly an unknown officer in the administration, who became famous by running Putin's campaign. Following the victory in the elections in 2000, he served as his chief of staff. As shown in the Table 2, the monopoly of manipulation in the second branch is represented by oil and gas industry, specifically by the energy giant Gazprom, the supplier of 40 percent of Europe's natural gas (Tayler, 2008). 'The Company owns the world's largest gas transmission network – the Unified Gas Supply System of Russia with the total length of over 168 thousand kilometres. Gazprom sells more than half of overall produced gas to Russian consumers and exports gas to more than 30 countries within and beyond the former Soviet Union' (About Gazprom).'

From 2000- 2002, Medvedev became the Deputy chairman of the Board of Directors of Gazprom.

'... an early sign that Putin might favour him [Medvedev] as his successor over other apparently more qualified senior aspirants' (Tayler, 2008).

The gas and oil company is referred to as a Russian weapon due to properties that gas has. It is a flammable, explosive and suffocative element. When Medvedev was in the command of Gazprom, the government did not have any control, market share stood in a hopeless state (Panyushkin & Zygar, 2008, p. 99).

It seems that there has not been any major change in the rule of the country with the presidency of Medvedev, thanks to his loyalty to Putin. Both Putin and Medvedev during their presidencies focused on problems such as corruption, bureaucracy, mafia banditry and development of economics. Medvedev's presidency lasted from May 7, 2008 till May 8, 2012, when he was appointed as the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation. Deeper comparison of Putin and Medvedev would not be beneficial for the purpose of this thesis since they slightly differ in the way how they rule and the period of their presidency, since Medvedev has been in the post of president for one presidential period under heavy supervision of Vladimir Putin.

'Medvedev proceeds from Russia's domestic developments and looks for how events on the world arena could promote Russia's growth. Putin, by contrast, starts with the global picture and draws conclusions on how external events can influence domestic processes' (Lukyanov, 2012).

At first, we must say that Medvedev was more concerned, speaking of the international relations, with Asia, while Putin is with Europe. Since Russians lived in an environment of so called legal nihilism, the environment where scepticism towards the law is transferred from Yeltsin period to Putin's era, someone liberal as Medvedev comes in handy. With Putin's faithful siloviki (members of the security services), and Medvedev's lack of personal ties to them, Putin secured his own need for Medvedev to tame and control siloviki. Hence the president is the head of the state, has many privileges such as the privilege to dismiss the prime minister, who is tasked to serve him (Tayler, 2008).

If there was ever a slightest chance of Medvedev dismissing Putin, the Duma would approve the new prime minister, where Putin's United Russia holds a 70% majority as a result of the dominant party regime.

With his growing carrier in politics after the success in Putin's campaign team, in 2003, Medvedev was appointed the Chief of Staff of the Presidential executive Office, followed by the

post of the Prime Minister. It seems that the friendship and mutual trust and loyalty between Putin and Medvedev throughout the years, in combination with their career experiences, laid the foundations to the power division in the political matters of the Russian Federation during their presidential and prime minister periods.

It seems that they are an unbreakable duo and keep on supporting each other in their political tactics as well as in personal life.

2.4 Putin and the Russian Military

In this subchapter, insight into Russia's military power will be useful with the use of Charles Tilly's *War Making and State Making as Organized Crime* and Theda Skocpol's contribution on states and social revolutions. Also, military element fits with other implications of the Putinocracy previously mentioned. The annexation of Crimea connected with the Ukrainian Crisis in 2014 is a great example of the Russian military power and its close link to the power of the presidential office. As we saw in the first chapter, Putin's rating from 2014, following the annexation of Crimea, skyrocketed (see Chapter 1, Table 1).

'War makes states, I shall claim' (Tilly, 1985). Moreover, he argues that the state organizes violence in a way similar to organized crime bodies. It just operates on a much larger scale.

Both of them, national states and ganglands, are determined by four main factors of the violence operation- war making, state making, protection, and extraction. National state, as well as an organized criminal body, provide protection in return for a tribute (in form of a ransom or of taxation),. Crimea can be clearly explained on this theoretical model.

Each of the four state functions are versatile factors because they are interconnected and one factor cannot operate without the interference of the other one. We could claim that they are subservient to each other and with their help, modern state institutions can be formed.

Tilly describes war making as a process of elimination of outside rivals of a state. Enmity of two forces can lead to a war, to a conflict that is needed to be solved in order to protect what is yours. It can appear in a form of expansion of a territory. 'War making yields armies, navies, and supporting services' (Tilly, 1985, p. 181). The Russian Federation still preserves the conscription, for military operations remain an important part of its state-making.

State making is another important key function of the state. This function is significant by retraction or simple elimination of the rivals inside the state that was annexed. It refers to maintaining the privileges of nobility and their dependence on the will of the tsar.

Protection could be *double-edged* (Tilly, 1985, p. 181) as Tilly indicates in his work. This word evokes positive feelings in the individuals regarding an offer for a safe place to be. Protection is usually perceived as an act when feelings of a threat emerge. It is here to keep rivals or

enemies out of the reach of the people who belong to your national state, territory. Even though the helper does not have much control over the rival, he is depicted *as a legitimate protector* (Tilly, 1985) . The price paid for the society's protection is to give, as a token of gratitude for the service, a word to keep the promise to protect the state and pay the taxes to state we are part of.

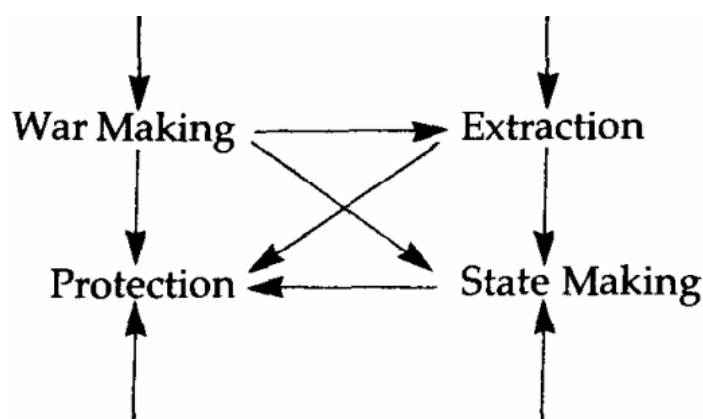


Image 4 Tilly's Formation of Modern State Institutions

In order to carry out the three functions mentioned above, extraction is a process of getting the suitable means for carrying them out. Russia was a large country, but by annexing other countries and making them their own members, they gained a lot. New resources, new working power, new military powers. Not to mention, the tax is also essential part in extraction. Thanks to that they could keep up with other countries, regarding the military technique and their possible rivals. But sometimes, even the best boss in a mafia sector cannot keep an eye at the others and their plotting against you. Relationship between the ruler and the ruled, reciprocity between internal and external protection and support for it have resulted in institutions of modern states – armies, bureaucracies, legislatures, courts, police, etc. The nature of this relationship, strength of the leadership, and character of opposition to power determined the character of a modern state in the twentieth century. The process of state making, Tilly claims, has been driven by two dominant factors – war making and the accumulation of capital, both central in Russia's trajectory to modernity as well.

The Question of Legacy

The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation seems to be, mainly from the Western point of view, seen as an act of illegal violation of international law. However, Columbia University professor Robert Legvold sees the annexation from Putin's perspective as the question of legacy.

He claims that bringing back Crimea to its motherland is likely to be perceived as a sturdy historical victory.

‘... I think that he sees this as probably the single most important thing that he will accomplish as president’ (Nesnera & Legvold, 2014).

Furthermore, according to Legvold, Putin sees the previous action with Crimea during the Communist era as the historical injustice, when Khrushchev shifted Russian Crimea to Ukraine in 1954.

Despite the fact that by this act, Russia destroyed an image of a reliable partner in terms of international relations, Wilson Centre analyst Matthew Rojansky sees the other side of it. The incentives of Putin, as presented to domestic audience, were to protect Russians. He not only defends the Russians, but the idea of Great Russia, which is powerful.

Comparatively to protection concept, Brent Scowcroft, who was the National Security Adviser to two U.S. presidents, Ford and George H.W. Bush, told The Voice of America that Putin wants Russia to be seen as a strong power. He claims that:

‘We pushed the borders of NATO right into the former Soviet Union. We denounced the ABM [anti-ballistic missile] treaty and so on and so forth. We didn't do it to weaken the Russians; we did it because we thought it was useful’ (Nesnera & Legvold, 2014).

Although this may be true, it is not in the eyes of Putin. By stating that NATO borders are looming right next to the former USSR borders, Putin can say that the annexation is just a reaction of Russia to what is happening near their borders.

In addition, the Crimean naval base with Russia's Black Sea Fleet is located on the Crimean Peninsula. Putin has a strong supportive base, in the matter of Crimea, among the citizens of the Russian Federation according to opinion surveys.

What Tilly is trying to say is that the balance between war making and state making, protection and extraction, is inevitable for working democracies. Since there is no balance between them and the dominance of the ruling institutions is prevailing, other two parts, from which institutions of representation and participation stem, do not have such a power. But how Putin is given the opportunity to make war making and state making so powerful? Why has it been not only tolerated, but actively supported? Indeed, the answer lies in the next chapter focused on political culture of the Russian Federation.

CHAPTER 3: Russia's Political Culture

The triumph of Putin on the political scene is caused not only by the dominance of his former party, United Russia, and close connections with Kremlin and with Medvedev, his loyal friend and prime minister, but due to power takeover in the Federal Assembly as well. Moreover, Russia's political culture creates a supportive environment for a blooming Putinocracy. Recently, Putin has become very close with Patriarch Kirill and this spiritual duo is seen publicly on every religious occasion. Despite the fact that Putin broke off the holy matrimony with his wife Lyudmila after 30 years, no one bats an eye. Besides political culture, does the Russian mentality, that is common for the Russian society and differs from the political culture in various perceptions of an individual in a system, or even the Orthodox Church have some impact on a participation in political life?

What role does the spiritual renewal in post-Communist Russia play in this process? With the insight of Almond and Verba and their great contributions to the topic of political culture, we will illustrate why Putinocracy is supported by Russian citizens. Pippa Norris brought up several levels of political support and the fact that the citizens have capability of distinguishing them (1999). With strong belief in democratic values, the Russian citizens are capable of judging the actions of the institutions, such as the disapproval of parliament is. As previously mentioned in the second chapter, institutions have played a significant role, but there is more to it. The inevitable for this chapter is analysis of support on the first level of political system described by Norris (and inspired by David Easton) – the level of political community.

On this level, we examine the orientation of citizens towards the general political community. It is 'usually understood to mean a basic attachment to the nation beyond the present institutions of government and a general willingness to cooperate together politically' (Norris, 1999, p. 10). There are various boundaries of political community, we can find them in terms like a regional community or any community based on ethnicity, class or religion. This creates the importance for social trust and social capital that will be described in following paragraphs.

As Norris states, 'attachment to the nation is conventionally measured by items tapping a sense of belonging to the community, national pride, and national identity' (Norris, 1999, p. 11). According to Levada Centre survey, most of the respondents felt proud of Russia as well as they are proud of be living in Russia (see Table 6 and Table 7).

Table 4 Are You Proud to be Living in Russia?

	April 2010	October 2013	October 2014
Definitely yes	44	28	37
Mostly yes	40	42	49
Mostly not	9	17	5
Definitely not	2	5	2
It is difficult to say	6	8	8

Note: Source: Levada Centre. Pride and Patriotism.2014

Table 5 Are You Proud of Russia Today?

	April 2010	October 2013	October 2014
Definitely yes	18	13	22
Mostly yes	37	40	47
Mostly not	27	30	13
Definitely not	7	10	5
It is difficult to say	11	7	12

Note: Source: Levada Centre. Pride and Patriotism.2014

If we want to reveal more of political culture of Russia, we have to look to the basic distinction of political cultures. Thus, it will allow us to explore the victorious Putinocracy.

3.1 Types of Political Culture

In order to answer the questions posed above, Almond and Verba give us an insight to what political culture is, why it is so important and essential for political sphere in a country, and how it is possible to measure it. Do the citizens influence the political elites or is it the other way around?

As Almond and Verba state: 'The political culture of a nation is the particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among the members of the nation' (Almond & Verba, 1989, p. 13). They introduced three types of political cultures (see Table 6). Needless to say, these types are ideal types of cultures and cannot be found in a pure form as well as was the case with Weber's three types of legitimate rule. Despite the fact that there is no pure form of it, one culture will be dominant in a mixture of it. 'The political culture becomes the frequency of different kinds of cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations toward political system in general, its input and output aspects, and the self as political actor' (Almond & Verba, 1989, p. 16).

Table 6 Types of Political Culture

	System as General Object	Input Objects	Output Objects	Self as Active Participant
Parochial	0	0	0	0
Subject	1	0	1	0
Participant	1	1	1	1

As depicted in Table 6, parochial culture shows no signs of any interest in the four kinds of political objects. In other words, in this type of culture, people have no expectations from the system itself. The second type is the subject political culture. Here, subjects have a high level of interest in the system as a general object as well as towards the output objects. But citizens who belong to this type of culture do not see themselves as active participants and their orientations towards the input objects meet with zero. 'The relationship is toward the system

on the general level, and toward the output, administrative, or „down-ward flow “side of the political system; it is essentially a passive relationship ...’ (Almond & Verba, 1989, pp. 17-18).

The last one is the participant political culture, in which its citizens tend to be explicitly oriented to the system as a whole and to both the political and administrative structures and processes. In other words, they are actively participating in all four political dimensions. As mentioned above, there is no pure form of political culture. Civic culture is a mixture of all three ideal types. There are also three groups of systematically mixed political cultures – products of specific historical evolution:

- I. The parochial- subject culture
- II. The subject-participant culture
- III. The parochial- participant culture

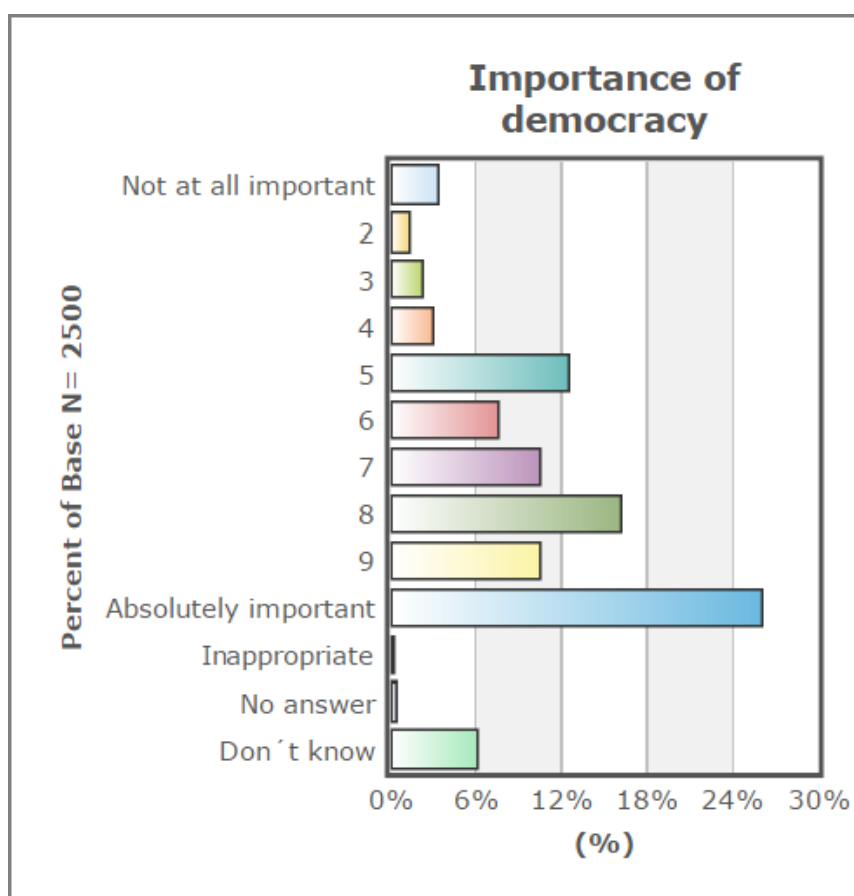
Citizens of the Russian Federation could fall into the parochial-subject culture model the best, thanks to its history of almost exclusively autocratic feudal rule into the 20th century, in which it is hard to establish democratic principles. In this culture, substantial portion of citizens has developed devotion toward a more complex and specialized political system with central governmental structures. Among other features of the parochial-subject culture are little to no expectations, little or no cognitive orientation towards the system (attachment, as a sense of pride, is demonstrated solely on emotional level).

3.2 Attitudes Towards Democracy in Russia

We might ask how democracy and its development are linked to political culture of countries. Larry Diamond states that ‘[i]t is, by now, a cardinal tenet of empirical democratic theory that stable democracy also requires a belief in the legitimacy of democracy’ (Diamond, 1995, p. 113). ‘Legitimacy’, Diamond argues, ‘rests on both diffuse support for democracy as the best form of government and on institutional performance’ (Diamond, 1995, p. 13). Thus, what attitude towards democracy do the Russian citizens have? The World Value Survey asked 2500 respondents following question: How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? On this scale where 1 means it is “not at all important” and 10 means “absolutely important” what position would you choose? According to the turnout of the survey, more than 26 per cent of asked sample stated that democracy is absolutely important

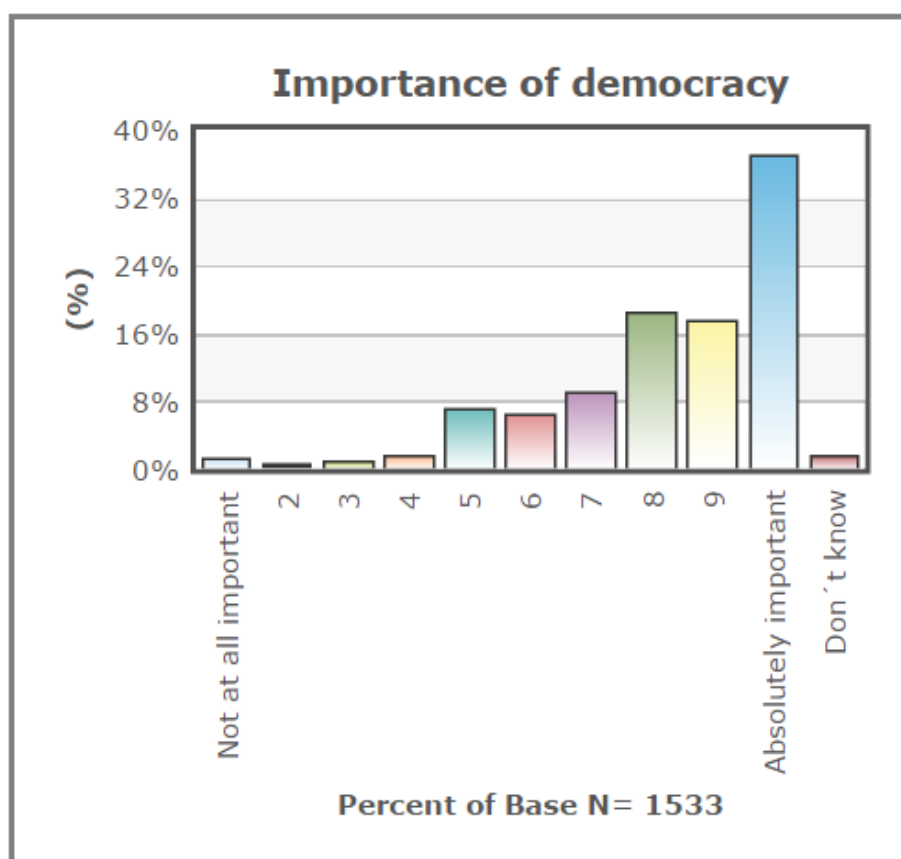
for them (see Figure 1). On a scale from 1 to 10, 3.3 per cent of respondents answered that democracy is not at all important to them. Comparing Russia and Estonia for the same question, the results differ (see Figure2). More than 36.9 per cent of respondents regard living in a country that is governed democratically as absolutely important, while just 1.2 per cent answered that it is not at all important to them. This comparison shows how neighbouring countries and former states of the Soviet Union perceive the notion of democratic rule of the country.

Figure 1 Importance of democracy: Russia



Note: Source: World Values Survey. *Importance of democracy*. Russia 2011

Figure 2 Importance of democracy: Estonia



Note: Source: World Values Survey. *Importance of democracy*. Estonia 2011

3.3 Social Capital

To understand the Russian society, it is necessary to look at the Russian Federation as a working civic network. One of the many approaches to political culture is offered by Robert Putnam in his work *Making Democracy Work*, where he states the basic principles under which democracy may operate functionally. He introduces four measurable features of the civic community, that is, patterns of civic involvement and social solidarity (Putnam, 1993, p. 83). These are

- i. Civic Engagement
- ii. Political Equality
- iii. Solidarity, Trust and Tolerance
- iv. Social Structures of Cooperation

According to these patterns, which indicate on what level democracy works in a country, we might describe what is missing in the country and its civic culture. Civic engagement deepens involvement with other citizens. In other words, most of the people get involved because someone they trust suggests it. According to The World Values Survey database, a survey made in 2011 illustrates that Russians are rather careful in whom they trust (see Table 7). In survey, where they had been asked how much do they trust their family, 87.1% responded that they can trust completely their family members (see Table 8).

Table 7 How Much Do You Trust

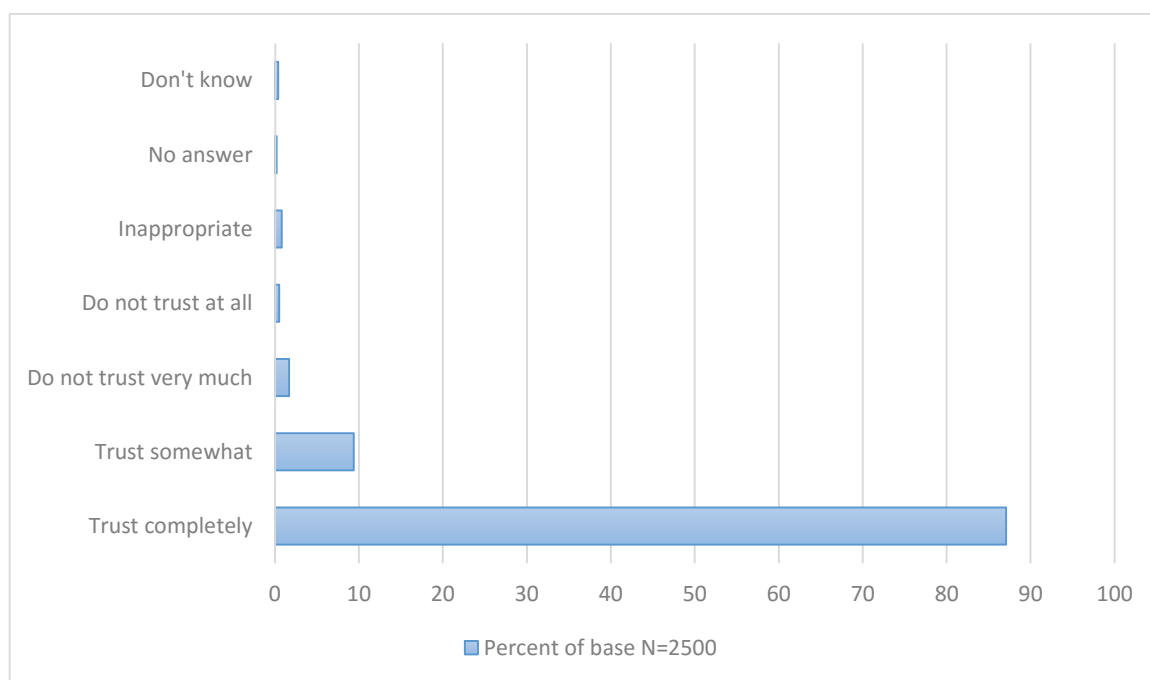
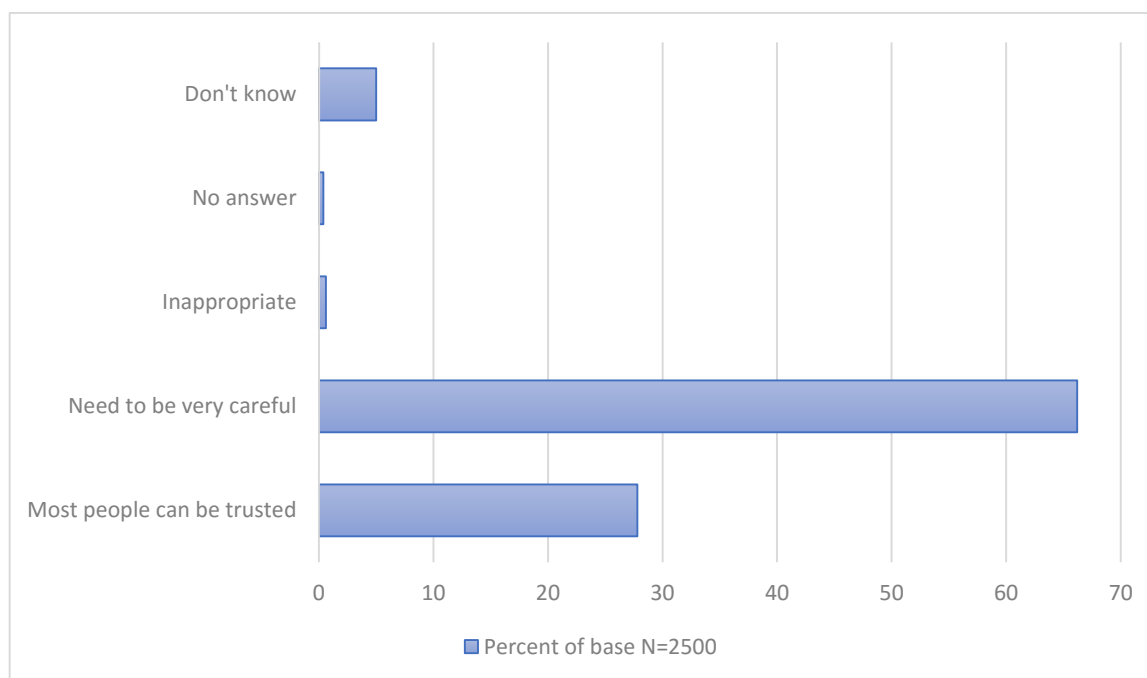


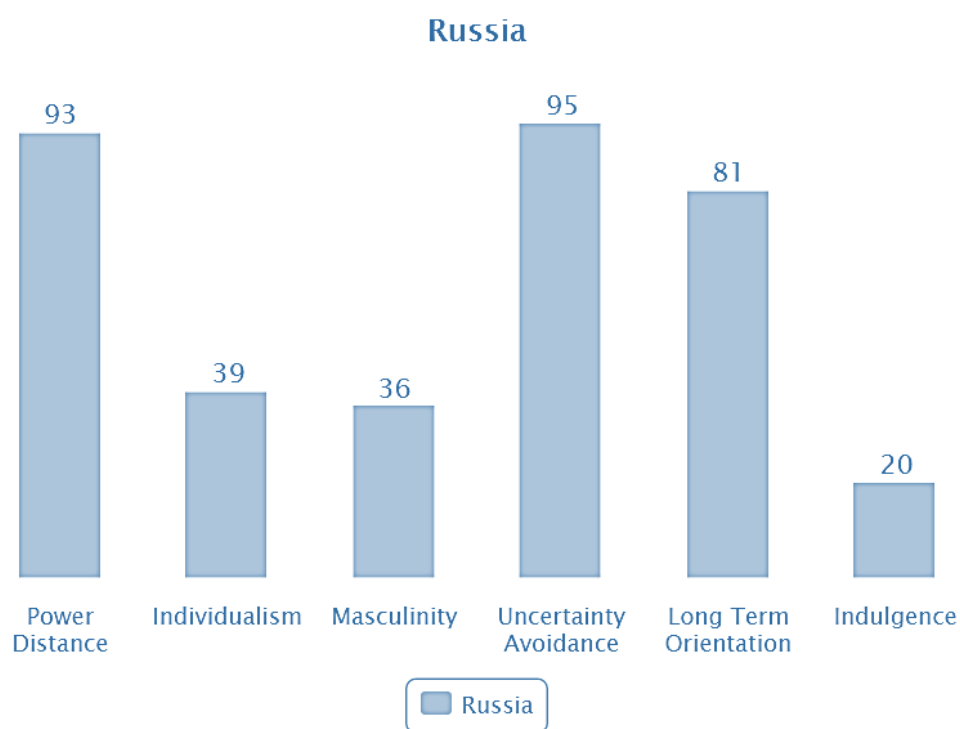
Table 8 Your Family Most People Can Be Trusted



At the same time, another survey database focusing on cultural indicators, the Hofstede Centre, has collected data about the Russian culture. Comparatively to Putnam's patterns for civic engagement and right functioning of democracy, the Hofstede Centre describes several points in which a culture is being examined. The first one is power distance, which illustrates acceptance of inequalities among individuals in society, measuring the level of submission to hierarchy and submission to authority. It reflects the attitudes toward the system of people who feel that their word has no weight in the system.

As shown in Figure 6, Russia's score equals to 93, which means that the power holders in the country are very distant to society (The Hofstede Centre, 2015). 'This is underlined by the fact that the largest country in the world is extremely centralized: two thirds of all foreign investments go into Moscow where also 80% of all financial potential is concentrated' (The Hofstede Centre, 2015). Under this centralized power system, citizens, mainly those who live in the Asian part of the Russian Federation, beginning with the Ural mountain range, may feel more alienated than the individuals living in the more developed European part, such as Saint Petersburg or Moscow.

Figure 3 The Hofstede Center- Russia



Note: Source: The Hofstede Centre. *Russia*.2015

Equally important to the Power distance indicator are the measures of individualism and masculinity. Individualism, in this survey, is a term that measures the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members (The Hofstede Centre, 2015). This determines whether the Russians think of themselves in individual terms or as members of groups of people, such as friends or family members. As the result indicates, the Russians are not that individualistic. For instance, Estonians, who scored 60 % in the survey (see Figure 7), and are also the former members of the Soviet Union, are more individualistic than their neighbours (likely due to their proximity to Scandinavian culture).

Similarly, social capital, as well as individualism can produce trust between groups of people, if the level of individualism is not too high. It builds up relationships among the citizens. The more people cooperate together, the more it gets better in terms of political culture.

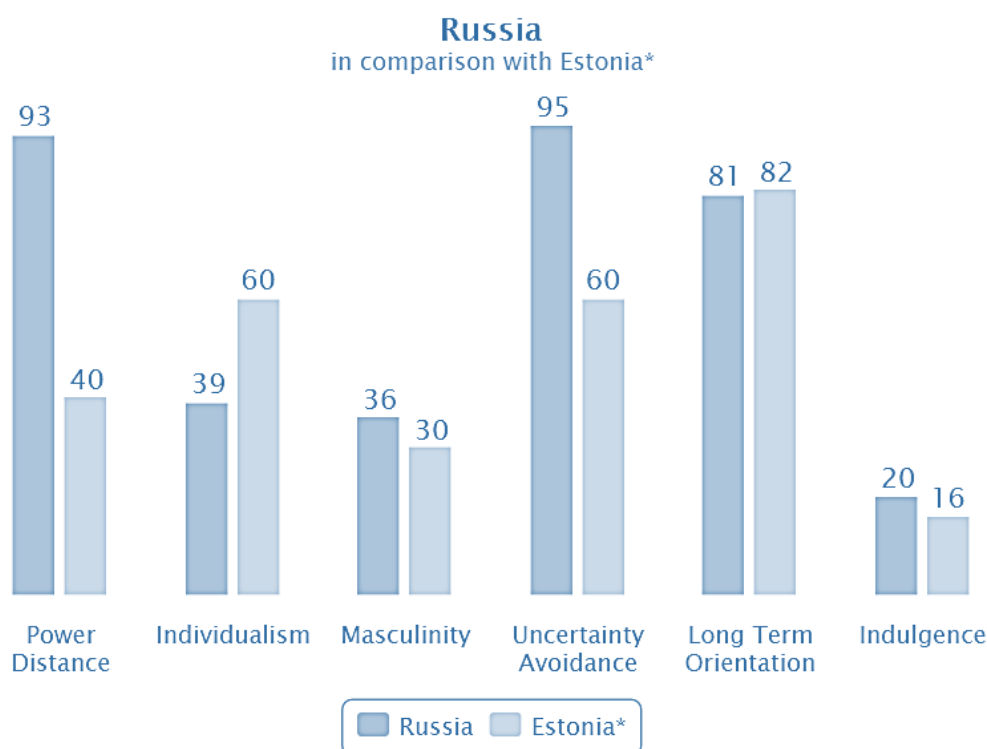
Lastly, masculinity is another interesting indicator that has appeared in the chart. Though critics object to its name (protesting that not all males are competitive and all female's cooperative

and caring), it is a useful measure that indicates what motivates people -- if they want to compete and be the best or rather prefer what to do what they like to do and focus on quality of life and relationships (The Hofstede Centre, 2015). The result of masculinity can go in two different directions.

Masculine is depicted with a higher competitiveness in the society as well as with higher results of the survey. There is a tendency to look at the achievements and success. This value process begins in early years and continues throughout the whole life.

Other direction it can lead to is feminine. It is characterized by lower results in masculinity rankings mainly due to different value preferences. There is no competition in each sphere of life, the emphasis is put on quality of life, caring of the others. We can assume that this feature is similar to trust and solidarity in Putnam's social capital. 'Russia's relatively low score of 36 may surprise with regard to its preference for status symbols, but these are in Russia related to the high Power Distance' (The Hofstede Centre, 2015). Each component of the culture is equally important if we want to understand why and how certain habits are rooted in the culture.

Figure 4 Individualism: Russia vs. Estonia



Note: Source: The Hofstede Centre. *Russia in comparison with Estonia*. 2015

In addition to the Hofstede Centre findings about trust, Putnam introduces the social capital, which is, according to him an essential feature for working democracy. Social capital 'refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions' (Putnam, 1993, p. 167). 'Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence...' (Putnam, 1993, p. 167). Three main elements laid the foundation for social capital; mutual trust, networks of generalized reciprocity, and norms of civic engagement. But trust is the key element for Putnam, as he claims 'trust lubricates cooperation' (Putnam, 1993, p. 171).

How is religion connected to political culture and social capital? It is due to its greater capability to generate networks of participation that are far stronger, more lasting, and more committed than secular civic organizations (Ivereigh, 2011).

3.4 The Role of the Orthodox Church

The connection of political community, social capital and the Orthodox Church in Russia is crucial. The role of the religion can go in various directions, as Samuel Huntington stated in *The Third Wave*. In the countries that went through the transition state, 'the Orthodox Churches could emerge as a powerful influence for democracy in South Eastern Europe and the USSR' (Huntington, 1991). Although this may be true, Putnam research showed 'the rapid shrinking of civil society of most of the 20th century closely correlates to the diminution of religious practice' (Ivereigh, 2011). Huntington examines the contribution of various religions to democratization. The Protestant Church was the original democratizing force and for a long time scholars believed that Catholic Church is an obstacle to democratization. But he shows that the third wave of global democratization was led to a great degree by the Catholic Church. Elements favourable for democratization may likewise be found in Islam and Confucianism – much depends on political and social circumstances. Such may be the case also with the Orthodox Church in the future of Russia, even if presently it may be viewed more as a conservative element working to slow democratization down.

The role and the position of the Orthodox Church in the Russian history is eye-catching. Before the Communist regime took power, the Orthodox Church was the dominant religion and kept

people together. Yet, there were also various branches of other religious group but they were not as widespread as the Orthodox Church was. After the years of religious oppression by the Communist regime, the Orthodox Church is going through its upsurge, which may seem as a spiritual renewal. 'In Russia..., the number of those who declared their belief in God and their adherence to the Orthodox tradition rose in the short term, immediately after the fall of communism...' (Pippa Norris, 2011, p. 190). Putin acknowledges the importance of the Orthodox Church in Russia and he puts an emphasis on keeping the symbiotic ties between the state and the Orthodox Church.

His close relationship with Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, is visible on many religious occasions. During one, Patriarch Kirill stated that 'Putin's rule is a miracle' (Pomerantsev, 2012). Yet, Putin's 'holiness' could have failed due to his divorce with his now ex-wife Lyudmila, people do not seem to not care about it and take their divorce as something that can happen to anyone. So Putin is still seen as a good man devoted to the Holy Spirit. Thus, he does not need a wife, he has Mother Russia.

With trust, cooperation comes hand in hand. When people trust each other, it is more likely that they will cooperate on a higher level than the individuals who do not trust each other. It is a never ending process of trust and cooperation. It is not only required in terms of civic culture, yet it is required between legislature and executive, between government and private group. Cooperation itself breeds trust (Putnam, 1993, p. 171). When we focus on statistics (see Image 4) showing how many believers of the Orthodox Church are in Russia, we can assume that they share a common trait useful for cooperation. Although Putnam would emphasize networks of interpersonal communication and exchange in societies and divides them into two groups. These are horizontal and vertical networks. Horizontal networks can be described as agents that carry equality and power, while vertical links unequal agents in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence (Putnam, 1993, p. 173). Further he explains that religious groups blend hierarchy and equality, yet he only mentioned Protestant and Catholic Church (Putnam, 1993, p. 173). It means that there can be a difference between every religious group due to their different perspectives toward a god. Despite the fact that the Russian citizens worship other religions as well, there is still majority of those who decided to be followers of the Orthodox Church. In addition to the survey, from my own experience, I have never met a single

Russian that was of other religion than the Orthodox Church, nor who would declare themselves an atheist.

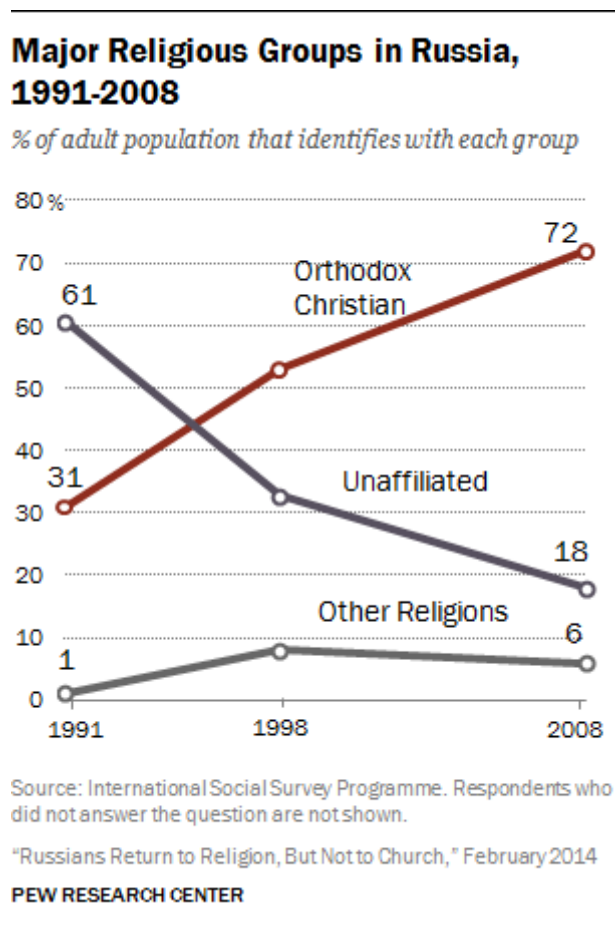


Image 5 Major Religious Groups in Russia

With coherence of the state and the Orthodox Church, Putin's devoted voter base is likely to support him in the future if we rely on Putnam's approach. All things considered, political culture, that is based on the parochial-subject elements, shows great support for hierarchy and submission to authority has a long way to go to change towards a more participative one. The autocratic ways of the rule over the citizens are founded in the history of Russia. The feudal practices are lingering in the Russian culture as the Russian film director and actor, Andrei Zvyagintsev sees it. He claims that 'we are a feudal society with a slavish mentality. I don't think we can ever change this until our entire world order changes. We need to have many new generations born in freedom' (Kishkovsky, 2012).

Conclusion

Blooming Putinocracy

When considering the historical events and political systems under which Russia had been led, it should not be a surprise that the legacy of the strong hand prevails even in today's Russia. Years of autocratic rule have left a mark on evolving political culture in Russia. It seems that Putin just fits into the historical pattern. He abounds what is appealing to the crowds; charisma, special use of traditions and symbols harkening to the past, power gained by numerous good relationships with other powerful men in the system, and alliance with the Orthodox Church by his side. Even though citizens subscribe to democracy as an ideal rule, at the same time, the overwhelming centralized power and operation of the institutions in the state makes it almost impossible for democracy to evolve into one familiar to the Western world. Putin, with the support of his faithful state bodies, whether it is represented by United Russia, his former political party, equally the State Duma and Federal Assembly, all of them works solely for Putin's purpose. Needless to say, the Russian citizens play the essential role in this whole process of anchoring Putinocracy.

Due to the historical bonds to autocracy, people in Russia have always tended towards the rule of a strong hand, that is no exception for today's Russia. Putin rules with this autocratic hand but with traits of something that reminds us of democracy. Even though the fundamental liberties are implemented in the Russian legislative system, it does not mean they are being guaranteed in practice (and some are limited in legislation as well). According to Freedom House, Russia is defined as not free country. The same goes for the press and the internet is evaluated as partially free. While searching the site, one might notice news referring to imprisonments of activists or even bloggers with charges up to three years in the jail. Despite the fact that the Russian citizens or at least most of them are aware of what is going on in their country, they still support Putin and his rule. Several reasons for their actions had been mentioned above. It is caused by the parochial-subject mixture of political culture, determined by the citizens and their attitudes toward the system as a general object, input and output objects, and the way how individuals see themselves in the system. Not to mention, a substantial portion of citizens has developed a (largely emotional) devotion towards a more complex and specialized political system that is focused on centralization. Another fact is that

they have little expectations, little or no cognitive orientation towards the system which may allow Putinocracy to grow even deeper roots into the system and life of citizens on such a level. All aspects of Putinocracy taken into consideration, this thesis indicates that Putinocracy finds its place among the citizens of the Russian Federation despite their subscription to democratic principles on the surface.

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If there was a straightforward way how to turn away from Putinocracy, it would take many years, even generations. With the pace Putinocracy is anchoring in the system, among Putin's political followers and prominent friends as well as the Russian citizens, it is almost hopeless situation for a rapid and dramatic change. Thus, the situation in the Russian Federation is rather unlikely to change.

Resumé

Obsah bakalárska práce je venovaný problematike politickej kultúry a jej vzťahu k autoritám súčasnej Ruskej federácie, ktorej najvýraznejším predstaviteľom je prezident Putin. Aj napriek tomu, že súčasná spoločnosť podporuje demokratické princípy vládnutia, realita je iná. V stále silnejúcej Putinokracii, t. j. vlády reprezentovanej Vladimírom Vladimírovič Putinom, nachádzame nielen moderné demokratické princípy fungovania moderného štátu, ale bohužiaľ aj znaky a prejavy spôsobu vlády, ktoré sa nepochybne viažu k obdobiu absolutistického cárskeho Ruska. Kult „otca“ veľkej Rusi Putina je na vzostupe odo dňa, keď sa v roku 1999 dostal k moci. V jeho úvodnom novoročnom príhovore prehlasoval, že demokracia je jedinou možnou cestou pre smerovanie moderného Ruska. Vízií obnovy silného Ruska venoval všetok svoj um a sily. Výsledkom jeho práce je skutočnosť, že krajine, ktorá po zániku Zväzu sovietskych socialistických republík stála pred ekonomickým krachom, sa stala opäť krajina zohrávajúca vo svete nezastupiteľnú rolu. Avšak tento výsledok bol zaplatený zníženou úrovňou demokracie.

Charizma, ktorá k prezidentovi Putinovi neodmysliteľne patrí, vytvára akúsi predstavu o tom, že tento vplyvný muž dokáže všetko na čo pomyslí. Jednou z týchto vecí je aj pripojenie Krymu k Ruskej federácii. Týmto ničím neospravedlniteľným krokom pobúrila demokratický svet, ale v očiach ruského národa len podporil svoj mocný kult. Opätovne sa začalo hovoriť o tom, že prezident V. V. Putin buduje moderné Ruské Impérium. Jeho vláda sa nesie v duchu tradícií cárskeho dvora, kde lojalita, vláda pevnej ruky „báťušku“ cára a historické prepojenie s Pravoslávnu Cirkvou mali neodmysliteľné miesto pri fungovaní všetkých oblastí krajiny. Pýšiac sa starými symbolmi moci cárskeho Ruska, t. j. dvojhlavou orlicou a slovanskou trikolórou, sa čoraz viac podobá na cára, ako na voleného zástupcu občanov krajiny v 21. storočí.

Okrem nespochybniteľnej charizmy drží vo svojich rukách mocnejšie zbrane. Medzi svojimi nasledovníkmi má mnoho vplyvných ľudí, napríklad svojho verného priateľa, niekdajšieho prezidenta a terajšieho premiéra Dmitrija Anatoljeviča Medvedeva. V politickom živote muža ako je Putin, lojalita vždy zohrávala veľkú úlohu. Medvedev ako verný priateľ nikdy nesklamal. Je to muž, na ktorého sa vždy môže s dôverou obrátiť a nájsť pevnú podporu. Navyše, obrovskú podporu nachádza aj v inštitúciách ako aj Štátnej dume a Rade federácie. Jeho bývalá politická

strana je dominantnou stranou v Štátnej dume s viac ako 2/3 majoritou. Medzi ďalšie silné Putinove zbrane využívané na podporu režimu patrí aj gigant Gazprom, od ktorého dodávok plynu a ropy je Európa ešte stále závislá.

V súvislosti s politickým myslením Putina nie je možné opomenúť ani úlohu ruských ozbrojených síl v jeho ponímaní veľkého Ruska, s poukázaním na jej historické tradície. Aj v tomto svetle je treba chápať anexiu Krymu, na ktorého území sa nachádza najväčšia Čiernomorská námorná základňa Ruskej federácie.

Ako už bolo spomenuté, veľkou oporou vlády V. V. Putina je aj ruská pravoslávna cirkev, Napríklad moskovský Patriarcha Kirill vyhlásil, že Putinova vláda je hotový zázrak. Rusi po páde komunizmu opäť našli svoju vieru v Pravoslávnu Cirkev a počty veriacich stúpajú aj medzi mladou generáciou. Tieto mohutné masy navštevujú chrámy a spolu s svojimi kňazmi sledujú Putinove činy. Vzhľadom na príklon širokých vrstiev obyvateľstva k pravoslávnej cirkvi a tradičným ruským hodnotám možno konštatovať, že v ich prípade ide kombináciu parochiálnej a subjektívnej kultúry. To znamená, že početné množstvo občanov si vytvorilo oddanosť pre viac komplexný a špecializovaný politický systém so zameraním na centralizáciu. Je to spôsobené aj tým, že v minulosti mali ako vzor len autokratický model vlády. Ďalej sa táto kultúra vyznačuje tým, že ľudia majú nízke očakávania, nízku alebo žiadnu kognitívnu orientáciu k systému.

Paradoxom je, že aj napriek nepriaznivým prognózam, ktoré vyplývajú z vyššie uvedenej kultúry, občania uplatňujú svoj právo voliť, avšak nie za podmienok, za akých volia občania západných demokracií. Postoj ruských občanov k samotnej demokracii je viac ako pozitívny. Avšak v posledných prieskumoch verejnej mienky sa ukázalo, že mnoho respondentov by si vedelo predstaviť aj iný politický systém, ktorý by mal „vlastnú“ formu, inú než demokracia. Z týchto vyjadrení nadobúdame presvedčenie, že pre túto časť ruskej spoločnosti je Putinokracia práve tým politickým systémom, ktorý by viacej vyhovoval veľkej časti obyvateľstvu. Túto tézu podporuje fakt, že mentalita obyčajného ruského človeka je pevne zviazaná s históriou autokratického cárskeho Ruska, prezentovaného vládou panovníka s tvrdou rukou, ktorý ich prevedie v dobrom aj zlom. Pri tempe, aké Putin udržuje v upevňovaní Putinokracie, nadobúdame presvedčenie, že tento kult a aj Putinokracia budú mať aj v budúcnosti pokračovanie. A to aj napriek snahám časti verejnosti, ktorí sú odhodlaní protestovať proti

nedemokratickým prejavom vládnutia rôznymi legitímnymi formami (sloboda zhromažďovania, internetové blogy). Rozkvet Putinokracie v ruskej spoločnosti je silnejší než by sa dalo predpokladať, a ak by sa tento trend mal zmeniť, čo je vzhľadom na súčasný vývoj spoločnosti nepravdepodobné, trvalo by to dlhé desaťročia, než by nastala rapídna zmena v Ruskej federácii.

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