*Chamomile is Russia’s unofficial national flower*
I. How does political participation and citizen involvement in civil society in Russia differ from other countries we’ve studied, especially Britain? Why is participation so low?

Political Participation In Russia

*Civil society*: voluntary organizations outside of the state that link citizens through common interests and collective activity.

*Before 1917 (Russian Revol.), civil society was weak

*After, came under control of Soviet authorities: the party should represent correct interests of population → corporatist institutions: linked people to the party (workplace, media, culture, leisure activities, religion)

*After glasnost (1980s), civil society slowly began to ↑
History of Russia’s Civil Society

*(1987) first independent group: Moscow soccer team
*(late 1989) tens of thousands of groups that helped play a role in eroding Soviet rule
*(1991) grew dramatically but there was an ↑ of tensions (more religions) and gov. made it harder for religions other than Orthodox to build houses of worship etc.
*(recently): trying to co-opt civil society, allowing state to legislate what kinds organizations can and cannot
*especially to civic groups that are critical of government
*uses tax code to investigate source of income
*forcing groups to register with authorities
*police harassment & arrest (accused of tax evasion or revealing state secrets)
*(2006): passed a measure that requires organizations be approved by gov., restricting funds from foreign sources, regular inspections, approval of any activity
*After collapse of Communism, media was able to speak critically on issues for the first time (though radio and TV were controlled by oligarchs who had ties to Yeltsin → Yeltsin’s victory (1996)

* Media also supported Putin during consolidation of power

* Even after support, Putin used economic and legal tactics to curb editorial independence

* Media is now under direct state ownership or indirect state-controlled firms - used as mouth pieces for oligarchs

* There are open media outlets but audience is teeny tiny compared to radio & TV audiences AND they are pressured to not cover subjects the gov. doesn’t like and provide a pro-gov. P.O.V.

* Those who defy gov. risk their lives: 2006: eighty-eight journalists killed (2nd to Iraq)
CIVIL SOCIETY?

Oh I can’t “bear” with it anymore.
Putin Regulates Civil Society

- Russia uses Microsoft to suppress dissent
- **Claims that inquiries reflect concern about software piracy**
  - BUT rarely carry out raids against *advocacy groups* or news organizations that back the government.
  - ex: Baikal Environmental Wave
- The authorities are receiving assistance from Microsoft itself
  - Encourages authorities to pay attention to illegal Microsoft distributors, not consumers and doesn’t actively denounce the suppression
## Russian and UK Civil Society Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>UK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High voter turnout</strong></td>
<td>~65% (not sure because of corruption)</td>
<td>~70%</td>
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<td><strong>Most do not attend church on a regular basis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>~11,000 different faith groups</td>
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<td><strong>Most do not belong to sports, recreational clubs, literary or other cultural groups, charitable organizations, or labor unions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>~900,000 civil society organizations (trade unions, sports clubs, charities, universities, political parties, clubs, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Only ~1% report belonging to a political party but they are informed about politics</strong></td>
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<td>Party loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government places restrictions and tries to weaken groups that are critical</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>No restrictions; encourages citizens to join</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Control interest groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interest group pluralism &amp;neo-corporatism</td>
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How free are Russian citizens to form groups & make their voices heard re: political & social issues?
Putin Regulates Religion

- Russian Orthodox Church is the official religion
  - 71% of Russians embrace Russian Orthodoxy
- Banned Protestant (Western) denominations
  - required under the law to register with the government to do anything more than praying at home
- Why?
  - more comfortable with having a close alliance with the church than independent organizations
  - nationalistic ideology to restore Russia’s pride ever since the end of USSR
- Problems
  - different ethnic groups with different religions - conflict!
Putin Controls Political Opponents

Stop List: a roster of political opponents and other critics who are barred from TV news and political talk shows by the Kremlin

- After USSR’s fall, networks were owned by oligarchs. Though they operated with relatively few restrictions, their owners were loyal to the government but often used them to settle personal and business scores
- After the incident with NTV, all the major networks are now owned by the government or its allies

Notable Victims:
- Mikhail M. Kasyanov - Putin’s former prime minister
- Andrei N. Illarionov - Putin’s former chief economic adviser
- Garry K. Kasparov - former chess champion and leader of the Other Russia opposition coalition
- Viktor A. Shenderovich - satirist
- Members of liberal parties
- Televizor - rock group
- Actors
**Activism on Social & Political Issues**

**Moscow Helsinki Group:** human rights NGO. Brings justice to those affected in the Soviet Union

**Livejournal.ru:** used a blogging site to organize an outreach and volunteer dispatcher organization during the forest fires in 2010

**Monstration:** new kind of political protest - create nonsense signs - a parody to demonstration signs

[http://www.hrw.org/features/russia-civil-society](http://www.hrw.org/features/russia-civil-society)

**Human Rights Center Memorial:** to preserve the horrors of the Soviet Union
What role do patron-client networks play in Russian politics?
How does this hamper the development of genuine pluralism?

**Patron-client relationship:** the state provides benefits (power, jobs, land, goods, etc.) to a single person or small group in exchange for support and loyalty.

**Pluralism:** has to do with pluralist interest groups which are interest groups that compete with each other and with the government for influence over state policies.
- increases group participation, exchange of ideas, unites people together to work for one common goal.
PUTIN’S POWER THROUGH PATRON-CLIENT NETWORKS

- Mainly originated from the nomenklatura system
  - Present when the Communist Party was still in power
  - Two lists: a list of name and a list of positions
  - People could not be matched up to a position without the help of a patron
  - Explains why the patron client network is so deeply entrenched to Russian politics

- Now, Putin plays the “patron” and everyone else who is of use to him is the “client”
  - i.e. Arkady Rotenberg: major shareholder of a civil engineering company, Gipotransmost
    - attempting to build a bridge from Russia to Crimea
  - Yury Kovalchuk: largest shareholder and chairman of Bank Rossiya
    - opened branches in Crimea
Effects of the Patron-Client System

- Putin (obviously) gets what he wants
- Since the patron-client system is so prevalent, it leaves no room for the less wealthy
- But most importantly, hampers genuine pluralism
  - When someone is Putin’s “client”, they are offering their loyalty to him
  - This tight circle intertwines the wealthy to the government, kicking pluralist interest groups out of the picture
  - Pluralist interest groups are not as powerful because their interests won’t be heard; only the clients’ interests will be taken into consideration
  - Basically, they are useless
How would you describe Russia’s interest group system?

* an **interest group** is an organization of people who share a common interest and work together to protect and promote that interest by **influencing the government**

* Allowed under **state corporatism** during Soviet Union where state determines which group has input in policy making

* after sudden shift towards market capitalism → **oligarchs** came to power and had control over media and the oil industry so they **had a lot of power over state policies** (compared to interest groups)

* Putin resists oligarchic control (arrested entrepreneurs who speak against him publicly for corruption etc.)

* now: Putin has well established **state corporatism**

* government established state-owned holding companies in many industries or companies run by those who are loyal to Putin (**insider privatization**)  

* Industries not yet owned who seem too independent or too rich, government will cite legal infractions to force companies to sell
**What is meant by statism?**

- **Statism**: a political system in which the state has substantial centralized control over social and economic affairs
  - states rights over individuals
  - in terms of interest groups, statism means that the State has the power to control and limit the interest groups
http://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac12/what-is-civil-society/

Case Studies Book p. 269 -273
Ethel Wood p. 222 – 227, p. 212 -214

http://www.hrw.org/features/russia-civil-society
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/12/world/europe/12raids.html?_r=0