

Abstract

Political power and economy were highly centralized under state socialism. Society was intervened thoroughly and overwhelmed by the Soviet state. Civil society was unable to emerge until the final years of the Soviet Union due to Gorbachev's reform programs of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Since the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, Russia's civil society, democratic institutions, and market economy have to develop simultaneously. Because of Yeltsin's alienated attitude toward civil society for the sake of smooth reforms without considering social demands, civil society had to develop on its own under the conditions of political chaos and economic depression.

In order to end the transition turmoil left by Yeltsin, Putin has been trying to craft a strong state through the "presidential vertical" and the "dictatorship of law." Russia's hybrid regime under Putin has been transformed to a sort of quasi-authoritarianism which is caused by the so called "managed democracy."

The relationship between the state and civil society under the framework of "managed democracy" is the following: State recognizes the existence of civil society and provides legal regulations for the latter's development. The Civic Forum which was held in November 2001 by the Kremlin authorities represented the most controversial case of state's role in the development of civil society. Putin officially recognized the importance of civil society through open dialogue, but in fact the Civic Forum was just a tool for the government to co-opt Russia's fragmented civil society.

Keywords: Putin, Russia, Civil Society, Civic Forum, Managed Democracy