Russian Civil Society

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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?
Civil Society: Background

Before 1917 revolution: weak civil society

- After: more civil societies; controlled by gov't
- Glasnost 1980s: civil societies reemerging
  - Led to tensions in society
    - Among citizens: religious group conflict
    - With gov't: gov't trying to control groups
## Civil Society: Russia vs. UK

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<th>Russia</th>
<th>UK</th>
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<td>- Weak b/c of corruption; unfair elections</td>
<td>- Support/opposition for political parties</td>
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<td>- Gov't controls media</td>
<td>- Fair elections; controls which party wins</td>
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<td>- Numerous political &amp; social organizations</td>
<td>- Unions</td>
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<td>- Professional unions</td>
<td>- Fair and frequent strikes</td>
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<td>- Restrictions on religious groups</td>
<td>- Freedom to protest</td>
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<td>- Police harassment</td>
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Police Attacks on Journalists

http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2010/05/17/world/20100518-IMPUNITY-1.html?_r=0
How free are Russian citizens to form groups & make their voices heard regarding political & social issues?
Rights

Technically Russians are allowed freedom of assembly and freedom of association (the right to join groups and for the group to take action for its interests)
Interest Group Voices

Interest groups that the Kremlin and Putin don't like find it very hard to speak their mind and have their voices heard.

Pro-Kremlin Interest groups have no trouble with this.
Interest Group Obstacles

Some ways that the government tries to hush the interest groups are:
- "piracy raids"
- police corruption
- violence
- censorship

What role do patron-client networks play in Russian politics? How does this hamper the development of genuine pluralism?
Nomenklatura

- the client carries out the policies of the patron
- this allows the client to advance in his career
- helps explain the widespread support for policies
- clients can be easily be replaced if they demonstrate disloyalty to their patron
Threat to Genuine Pluralism

- the nomenklatura as a form of a patron client system prevents new elites to form
- support Putin even if they disagree with his policies because they want to promote themselves
- some hope rival patron-client systems will form
In Spring 2011, Putin and Medvedev made public their plans to switch offices in when "elections" rolled around. The electorate was never really considered.
Sadimir

Poutin'

How Pluralism Feels
How would you describe Russia’s interest group system? What is meant by statism?
Russia's Interest Groups:

- An interest group is an organization that seeks to influence the government.
- Interest groups were not formally allowed under the Soviet Union.
- However, Russia had a strong interest group system with 2 main interest groups: the Russian mafia and the oligarchs.
The Russian Mafia:

- Strong underground network.
- Extremely violent.
- Made deals with government officials.
The Oligarchy

- Before Putin: very strong
  1. The oligarchs had kept laws and regulations from being passed.
  2. The oligarchs could buy their way out of any situation.
- Putin has worked to decrease the oligarchs’ power. Putin deported and arrested many of the people.
What is Statism?

● Statism is a system where the government controls the majority of the economic and political affairs of the state.
● Favors power over economic prosperity.
● Little interest in democratic institutions, laws, and regulations.
● Forces people to depend on the government.
Final Note:

http://gameandwatch.tumblr.com/post/46435631730/literally-me-every-day