



Democratic backlash in the post- Soviet era - the case of democratization and a backlash in Russia.

When scholars around the world now talk about the Russian democratization process , they talk about a "Russian Backlash". - 1) What is meant by this? 2) What are the main explanations of the phenomenon? 3) And how do these explanations together contribute to our understanding of the Russian case?

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Teodor Solhaug

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Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

University of Tromsø

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SECTION A: Introduction

1.1.1 Introduction

After the end of the Cold War the world has witnessed what Samuel Huntington calls a wave of democratization, especially in the post-Soviet countries. This means that several countries have taken upon themselves the task of trying to implementing democracy and making their national realms more democratic. At least in name (Huntington 1991, Sørensen 2008). Some scholars have even called the 20th century, especially the period after the Second World War, the golden age of democracy (Inglehart and Welzel 2009). Democracy is today seen as the most legitimate form of government in the world, as it is based on the people's right to choose and control their leaders. Not only so that the population can protect themselves against abuse from a governmental actor, but also so that they, to some extent, can control governmental spending. *"No taxation without representation"*. So it is in the populations own interests that a process of democratization does not stop and experience a democratic backlash. However, even if this is the form of government which has had the most support and legitimacy around the world after the end of the Cold War, it has not been implemented everywhere.

The biggest of the post-Soviet countries which tried to go through a democratic transition was Russia. Now, as Russia is one of the largest military powers in the world, the sole great power in the post communist area, and a major political player in three major regions of the world (Europe, the Middle East and East-Asia) its politics can affect a major number of countries. Russia is also one of the two major nuclear powers in the world, as well as it is one of the largest producers and exporters of oil and gas in the world. So as M. Steven Fish puts it *"It is therefore not surprising that Russia has been the subject of great attention from the West"* (Fish 2005 p. 2).

Moreover, when I later in this thesis discuss the ongoing unrest in Russia, it is often in connection to the Russian democracy. And this often raise the question: what kind of democracy are we talking about then? There are several definitions of democracy, and a growing number of people emphasize that we need to distinguish between effective and ineffective democracies. These ineffective democracies are by some considered to be "sham" democracies which hides under terms such as: "electoral democracy" and "hybrid democracy" (Inglehart and Welzel 2009). Some people may take the definition of democracy for granted, but it is important for a scholarly study to specify what definition will be the point of

departure, or the goggles to use, to analyze the world, and in this case Russia. Yet, what I in this thesis will try to explain is not whether Russia is a democracy, even if it may be mentioned in connection with the theory in my analysis.

Russia and several of the former members of either the Soviet Union (USSR) and or the Warsaw Pact went through a process of democratization in the early 1990s. Former Russian president Boris Yeltsin, with help from his domestic and foreign advisers, changed the political and economic system in the great country dramatically, almost overnight, using what some call a “shock therapy”. This meant trying to go from a planned economy to the making of a liberal market economy, which resulted in huge economic differences in the country. Some people, often in high government positions, got their hands on natural resources as gas and oil, or iron and nickel, which made them extremely wealthy. These people are today known as oligarchs, while others went through tough times barely hanging on (Hønneland 2006, Fish 2005). Nevertheless, the political system went from a one party system to a multi party system, and according to the constitution of 1993, Russia is a democratic state with a republican form of government based on the rule of law. However, these changes, both political and economic, had what some would agree to call catastrophic effects, leading to the collapse of the Russian ruble, and a democratic backlash in the late 90s and early 21st century, especially after Putin rose to presidency and power.

Thus what my thesis will try to explain is the following: *When scholars around the world now talk about the Russian democratization process, they talk about a "Russian Backlash". - 1) What is meant by this? 2) What are the main explanations of the phenomenon 3) And how do these explanations together contribute to our understanding of the Russian case?* In the thesis' analysis the last two questions will be given more attention than the first one.

In the world today we can see several attempts to implement democracy after regime change and it could be claimed that most focus today is on the democratization processes in countries in Africa and the Middle-East. Moreover, the major focus on, - and the importance of, democracy and democratization could be said to come from the theory or thesis known as the "Democratic Peace Thesis". In fact, there is an almost universal consensus in the social sciences about the theory, which says that there is a link between democracy and peace. It claims that democracies do not fight each other. This has many explanations, some of which focus on the norms that democratic systems create, as checks and balances which make it

natural to resolve conflict in the same way as, internally in democracies, on the international arena. While other scholars focus on the structures and interdependence between democracies as the most important features of democracy, which supposedly secure peace and prosperity in our realm. These are some of the many reasons why several scholars and politicians have seen the spread of democracy to other parts of the world as important during the 20th and 21th century. This is why a stop and recession in a process of democratization is such a cause of concern from the rest of the world. However, it is worth mentioning that the studies dealing with this thesis also present different results depending on the criteria they set for what is to count as war etc. Yet, this kind of thinking is not new to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Thoughts like this were already presented by Immanuel Kant in the 18th century. He already then foresaw a “zone of peace” between America and Europe, or what others call the western world or civilization. (Kant 2002, Gleditsch 1997 p.310)

Moreover, democracy and Russia is an exciting topic as we just have witnessed unrest and protests in Russia after the elections for parliament towards the end of 2011 and the presidential election in March 2012 where Putin won with 64 percent of the total votes. In other words by such a wide margin that there was only one round of voting, as this means that he had over 50 percent of the total votes in his favor, and he had an absolute majority of the votes. Now as some of the data which will be presented in my thesis show there have been several irregularities connected to the past elections in Russia, after the end of the Cold War.

Furthermore, we can actually read quotes by Vladimir Putin’s right hand man, former president Dimitrij Medvedev, saying before the presidential election of 2012 that Russia and its political system need change and that the current has served its purpose. Also the Soviet Union’s last leader Mikhail Gorbatsjov was taking part in the demonstrations after the Duma (the Russian parliament) elections in December 2011, and publically asked Putin not to run for president, and rather retire from politics after already serving three periods in office (two as president and one as prime minister). (NTB)

With the Democratic Peace Thesis in mind, it is no wonder why the form of government in this major atomic power is an important and interesting topic. If one accepts the notion of a universal peace between democracies the democratic part of the international community has huge interests in continuing to promote democracy in Russia. When it comes to the case of Russia, a backlash could be seen as a threat for peace not only in the West, but also in the

world. Therefore as a student of peace in the program; Peace, and conflict transformation, and a citizen of one of Russia's neighboring countries, I consider the topic of Russia's democratization and democratic backlash after the end of the Cold War an interesting and a relevant one.

As far as, the structure of this thesis is concerned, first there will be a theory chapter in which theories of democracy and democratization will be used to explain what is meant by a democratic backlash. Further on the theory chapter will present theories explaining why such backwards steps in the process of democratization may happen, divided into categories based on cultural and historical arguments and explanations, economic explanations, and explanations based on aspects of sharing or lack of sharing between the political institutions themselves, and political society's relationship to civil society. In the following chapter the methods of study will be presented, before I will go on to discuss the data collected in an analysis with the use of the theories presented in the theory chapter. During this analysis I will answer the three questions that are asked. It is worth stating that the two last questions that I ask in the problem statement, I will not discuss the problems and strengths with the different explanatory theories, rather I will try to show how a multidisciplinary approach can create a wider understanding of such a process as the one in Russia. Finally there will be a summary or conclusion where some of the thoughts on the findings will be highlighted.

SECTION B: Theory

2.1.1 Theory

In the first part of this chapter I will try to establish some understandings of the concept democracy, based on some major approaches to the term. What will be presented is how scholars that debate the "Russian backlash" define the term democracy, what criteria have to be met, so that one can talk about a process of democratization or a "backlash". Secondly, I will try to explain what is meant by a democratic backlash and how this is connected to democratization and democracy. At the end of the chapter some of the general explanations for a failure to democratize and how one can experience a backlash will be presented, which I will use as my main tools for the analysis and the discussion.

2.1.2 Democracy

There are several understandings or definitions of democracy. However, the simplest one is maybe the one that was used in the city states of Ancient Greece. The word democracy originates from two Greek words: "Demos" which means people, and "kratos" which translates as rule. In other words democracy is "rule by the people" (Sørensen 2008). At this point it is worth mentioning that I am aware that even if one connects the Ancient Greeks to democracy, and maybe regards Ancient Greece as the cradle of democracy, the political system was not based on a universal suffrage. The Greek city states were highly divided so when one talks about the people, one only refers to a small part of society. However, it was where the liberal democracy which we know from today's society came from.

Nevertheless, today scholars talk about democracy as something more than just rule by the people. We often link democracy to liberal values, and divide it into two categories: civil and political freedom, or liberty. One could also say that the democratic tradition we follow is about putting restraints on the political authority (Sørensen 2008). This has led to what I later in this thesis define as broad and narrow approaches to the term democracy.

The approaches mentioned above are the different goggles a scholar put on to analyze a case. One could use the approaches as a tool for conceptualizing the term democracy, which importantly define and put a regime into a classification. This is so that we can put countries into, or outside of, the "box" or definition we use. To put it in the way of M. Steven Fish, our understandings of a concept, and in this case democracy, is important to clarify because people can have different conditions, expectations and measurements and criteria for the

same concept. And if this is so it can be difficult to compare cases. Take for example the word revolution. If one defines revolution as an overthrow of a regime with the use of violence, the regime change which is often called a revolution in Hungary would not fit this definition. However, the Russian revolution fits. This example serves as an explanation of why it is important to later on define what I will use as the definition of what constitutes as a democracy. (Fish 2005 p. 15)

As mentioned above democracy means rule by the people and democracy has through time been given different meanings depending on time and space. One can find narrow concepts like the Greek democracy or broader definitions of democracy like the liberal democracy. The latter is what we today often connect to the word. To understand this I will look at two different approaches to democracy. Nevertheless, before I move on it is important to say that these are not the only two understandings of democracy. There are still plenty of different variations and models of democracy; however these are the ones this project will present as two competing understandings of what constitutes as a democracy.

These two models, or concepts, of democracy are not chosen randomly. They are referred to by several scholars who often create their own understanding of democracy in line with these definitions. This will be clarified in later in the thesis. (See Dahl, Cohen, Fish, Inglehart and Welzel, Linz and Stepan, Sørensen and Saward).

2.1.3 The narrow concept of democracy

The first definition of democracy that I will look at was formulated by Joseph Schumpeter. He uses a definition which is already referred to as a narrow concept of democracy and it needs some explaining. According to Schumpeter's theory democracy is a mechanism for choosing and changing the political leadership. Citizens of a democracy are given the opportunity to choose between rivaling political parties or leaders. In Schumpeter's mind the competition for political power is mainly done by elite individuals or groups in the society. This means that they control resources that make it possible for them to fight for legislative and executive power. The overall population will therefore be voting for these different elites who they find most eligible to rule over them. However, between elections all decisions are made by the politicians who the citizens have chosen to lead their country. So in this narrow definition of democracy what is important is being able to choose and elect new, or re-elect old politicians, not being part of the decision-making per se. (Sørensen 2008 and Saward 2003)

2.1.4 The broader definition of democracy

Compared to Schumpeter's approach to democracy, the definition presented by Robert A. Dahl is a broader one. He claims that democracy is something more than just being able to choose leaders through elections. Dahl's theory says that a key part of being a democracy is that the regime considers their citizens as political equals. This means that the citizens must have the opportunity to:

“(1) Formulate their preferences, (2) signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action, and (3) have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government.” (Sørensen 2008 p. 13).

Furthermore, these opportunities need to be realized through institutional guarantees from the government. And Dahl presents seven major points which the governmental institutions need to guarantee:

1. **Elected officials.** Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
2. **Free and fair elections.** Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
3. **Inclusive suffrage.** Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
4. **Right to run for office.** Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government, though age limits may be higher for holding office than for the suffrage.
5. **Freedom of expression.** Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials the government, the regime, the socioeconomic order, and the prevailing ideology.
6. **Alternative information.** Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by laws.
7. **Associational autonomy.** To achieve various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.

(Sørensen 2008 p. 13)

The first point listed above means that the politicians elected by the people decide, not for example a monarch appointed based on birth rights. As to the second one, I simply understand as the elections are free and fair, and without the use of force. The third point is concerned with having the right to vote and therefore participating in making the decision concerning who will lead the country. This means that all people, regardless of sex, have the right to vote. However, most countries have an age limit which one need to exceed if one is to be allowed to vote, and seen as accountable or responsible. In Norway this is the year one turns 18. The

forth point discusses having the right to run for offices like governor or in parliament etc, in other words that these offices are not reserved for a specific part of society. The fifth point listed by Dahl is freedom of expression. In a democracy the institutions of a government need to guarantee citizen's rights to express themselves, meaning that they can be critical towards the government and their officials and the leading paradigms, without being afraid of punishment in any form. So the main point here is really that people should be able to express their opinions without fear. Further, the sixth point listed is here understood as not only having access to information in general like the Internet or different media, but also having access to other religious writings from other beliefs or philosophies of life. I also understand this as having the right to access information which is not state dominated or constructed, for real not only in name. The last and seventh point is then of course having the right to organize people who believe in the same things be it religious or political.

Moreover, *“the seven conditions cover three main dimensions of political democracy – competition, participation, and civil and political liberties”*. (Sørensen 2008 p.14). So, when these conditions are met we have a regime which Dahl defines as a liberal democracy. These aspects together covers what I will call political openness.

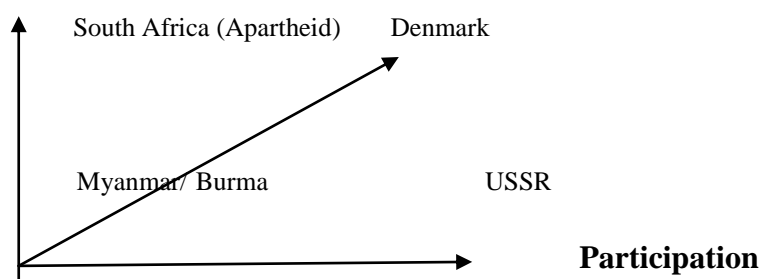
2.1.5 Liberal democracy vs. a narrow definition

Compared to the broader definition of democracy, Schumpeter also opens for competition and participation. However, competition in a democracy like the one presented by Schumpeter requires recourses and is therefore restricted to the elites. Participation is also possible but it is connected to being able to vote and choose leadership, not to be part of a democratic dialog, because between elections the elite in power decide how to run the country. Not to say that there cannot be a form for dialog, this is just understood it in this thesis as marginalized by the narrow approach and will therefore not be understood as a definition of a liberal democracy.

Furthermore, this thesis focuses mostly on the notion of liberal democracy. The reason why I concentrate on this is because this is now the most common understanding of democracy. Even if the major point or what one to some extent can understand as the most important feature of democracy is voting, scholars now understand democracy as something more than just this. Democracy as a form of governance that includes more than just voting is maybe not so hard to agree upon. Dahl and others identifies this as the essence of democracy: *“The core*

of political democracy has three dimensions: competition, participation, and civil and political liberties. When we study the status of democracy in a specific country, the first step is to look for these three elements". (Sørensen 2008 p. 27). Moreover this means that it is not possible to call a country a democracy, or at least a liberal one, without including all these three dimensions. Other scholars like Ingelhart and Welzel claims that democracies that do not include these dimensions are "sham" democracies which hide under the name of democracy with a twist that includes their own version or understanding (Ingelhart and Welzel 2009). The figure below illustrates this phenomenon:

Competition



Source: Modified from Georg Sørensen *Democracy and Democratization* 2008 p. 16.

The figure shows us how a regime can include parts of what we understand as a liberal democracy and at the same time fail to open for other parts which we see as important features of democracy. As an example we can look at South Africa under the apartheid regime. The country was presented as a democracy, they had competition, yet the political arena was not open for everybody. In the other end of the scale the former Soviet Union had almost universal participation in their realm, there was, however no competition for power as there was only one party. The goal of a democracy must therefore be to have both participation and competition.

So the key feature of what is now the most common understanding of democracy is that there is meaningful competition between individuals and groups (parties) for executive power and positions of government. And that there is a system of inclusive participation; this means that no major social group is excluded from participating in the competition for power. This also means that there regularly is a somewhat free and fair elections, and that the government guarantees their citizens civil and political liberties like freedom of speech. Thus when

scholars attempt to find out if a specific country is a (liberal) democracy these are the key features we look for. (Sørensen 2008 p. 14).

Moreover, why do I use this definition? It is important to specify why the thesis will focus exactly on Dahl's definition, and it is because it is the most common understanding of what constitutes as a democracy. The basic seven points presented by Dahl are even used as the basis for measuring the level of democracy and freedom by major statistical research programs like Freedom House's index called Freedom in the World, and referred to and used by several of the scholars which I refer to. (See: Fish 2005, Sørensen 2008, Inglehart and Welzel 2005) This also means that the importance of this definition is connected to the fact that the seven aspects which are mentioned by Dahl can over time tell us something about a process of democratization. Based on the seven points it is possible to identify if the process has stopped, are moving forward or backwards.

2.2.1 Democratization and democratic backlash

In the section above some general features for what constitutes as a liberal democracy have been established. Whether Russia meets these criteria for being a liberal democracy will be answered at a later stage. What will be presented in the next section of the chapter is what scholars mean when they talk about a democratic backlash, and how this is connected to democratization.

2.2.2 Towards Democracy

According to Ambrosio (2009) the literature dealing with democratization has mainly been concerned with the positive progress and the cases of successful democratic consolidation, rather than the cases of democratic failure. This is why most of the theories which I use in my master thesis are mainly focused on processes which promote democracy. I will therefore use the theories to say something about backlashes based on the aspects or features which the theories highlight as important for a successful process of democratization. Nevertheless, this may not become a major problem because to understand what a democratic backlash means one first has to understand what is meant by the notion of democratization. As I will come back to in this thesis; it is when the process of democratization stops and moves backwards that one can measure and speak of a backlash.

Democratization can be said to happen when a non-democratic regime is undertaking a transition towards a more democratic system. So when we see shifts towards greater

democracy we have democratization. According to what is presented by Sørensen's model earlier in the thesis, I understand democratization as happening either when there is increased competition (liberalization, yet not necessarily in the economic respect) or increased participation. (Sørensen 2008 p. 16). So democratization can happen both when a regime or a system becomes more open for political competition, or more open for participation from the public.

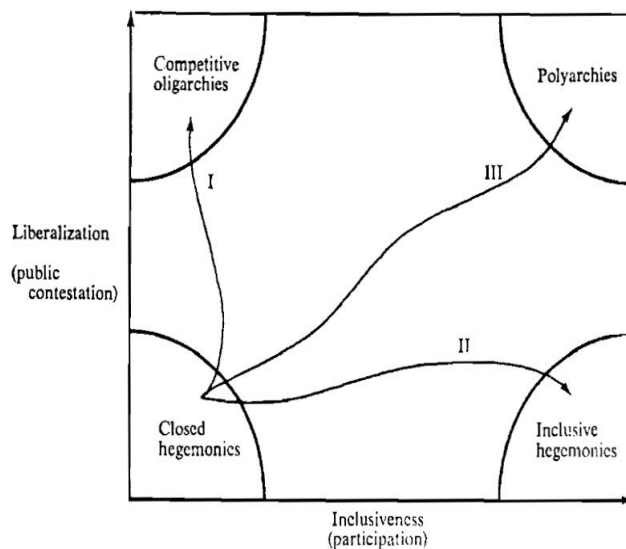


Figure 2: from Robert A. Dahl *Polyarchy* 1991

In the figure from Dahl we can understand that a shift towards more liberalization, or more inclusiveness, represents democratization. However, the main goal must always be to reach what Dahl calls a Polyarchy or what others call a consolidated democracy, a democratic system based on both participation and competition for power. (Dahl 1991, Sørensen 2008). Moreover, to understand this we can say that the goal of a democratic process must be to establish a consolidated democracy which respects the values of a liberal democracy. A regime is a consolidated democracy when:

- *Behaviorally*, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national actors, be it social, economic, political or institutional, spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state.

- *Attitudinally*, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life

in a society such as theirs and when the support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces.

-Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and nongovernmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subjected to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.

(Linz & Stepan 1996 .p 6)

Furthermore, what Linz and Stepan highlight is that it is impossible to reach the goal of a consolidated democracy without having a society which respects the values which in this thesis are presented as parts of a liberal democracy. They claim that for a regime to become a consolidated democracy some conditions need to be in place to reinforce the regime. First, there must be conditions in place for a free civil society. Second there must be a autonomous political society. Third, there must be a rule of law to ensure the legal guarantees for citizens, so that even if they support a part of the society other than the ruling one they need not be afraid as long as they follow the rules of the game. Forth, there must be a functioning state bureaucracy which is usable by any new government. And fifth there must be an economic society which is ensured by governmental institutions. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p.7)

Now, civil society means an arena where self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals mostly autonomous from the state articulate values, interests, solidarities and accusations. This means that civil society can include groupings or movements like for example; women's groups, religious groups, intellectual organizations or trade unions. The idea is that this civil society can be a social force with the capacity to mobilize for demonstrations or strikes against for example military -led regimes or other forms of authoritarian regimes. An example of how civil society can work as a social and political force is the demonstrations after the presidential elections in Ukraine in 2004, which lead to the election victory of the opposition leader Viktor Jusjtsjenko. What happened is that several irregularities were observed during the election, and after major civil demonstrations and pressure from the international community Ukraine held not only two but three rounds of election between the two major candidates. (NTB; dramaet i ukraina). However civil society in authoritarian regimes is often marginalized or made illegal. (Linz & Stepan 1996).

A political society is an arena where different groups contest and compete for the legitimate right to exercise control over the public and the state apparatus. The core features of a political society include having; political parties, elections, electoral rules, elected political

leadership and a governmental legislature, which is in itself elected to monitor and control the democratically elected government. This can take different forms, such as for example presidencies, semi-presidencies and parliamentary rule. Nevertheless, regardless of the form of democratic government all these features are needed for a sustainable political society. (Linz & Stepan 1996).

Furthermore, all the significant actors, be it parts of civil society or political society, need to respect and uphold the rule of law. Because democracy is a form of government which respects and protect citizens' rights, and these are guaranteed and protected by the rule of law, where as in the eyes of the laws everyone are equal.

The final condition presented by Linz and Stepan is the arena which they call the economic society. This is the constant mediation between the market and the government. Because according to Linz and Stepan the market in a consolidated democracy is never purely free, conditions and restraints where the actors of the market operate are controlled by government laws and regulations. At the same time, as the state often has ownership in parts of the market, the market in itself is important for the state and private revenue and production so that the economy can go round. (Linz & Stephan 1996).

So, democratization is happening when a regime moves towards more competition for power or more participation from the public, and the ultimate goal is a consolidated democracy based on the respect and uphold of liberal democratic values. Then what is meant by a "democratic backlash" ?

2.2.3 Democratic backlash

The easy way of answering this is to say that if one looks for the criteria from above as signs of democratization, seeing the opposite as a democratic backlash. In other words a democratic backlash happens when the democratic process stops and takes steps backwards, from more competition or participation towards less. When a regime moves away from what Dahl calls a "Polyarchy" (see the second figure), and towards one of the other classifications.

Measuring a shift like this is problematic because it can be hard to quantify democracy and democratization. However, as Huntington claims the two dimensions, created by Dahl (contestation and participation), make it possible to judge to what extent a regime is democratic, to compare it with other regimes or systems, and maybe most importantly, to

analyze whether systems are becoming more or less democratic (Huntington 1991). There have in fact been several attempts to quantitatively measure the degree of democracy in the world and in specific countries, in accordance to the points listed by Dahl. As several scholars dealing with this kind of work refers to the Freedom House Index as the best tool for looking at shifts and trends connected to democracy, especially those who use Dahl's definition of democracy based on political rights and civil liberties, it will also be used to show trends in this thesis. (See Sørensen 2008, Fish 2005, Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

Measuring the phenomenon in social science has become widespread and a large part of the social sciences. During the 90's it became normal to categorize and grade regimes according to the levels of democracy. This was used to compare cases of democratization (Pridham 2001). And this means that it has also become natural to try to measure democracy.

Huntington claims Robert A. Dahl's seven points and three dimensions have in fact made it possible to measure democracy. One of the surveys which try to measure this is the Freedom House index: freedom in the world.

The survey tries to measure the dimensions: competition and participation, political rights and civil liberties. Each category is ranked on a seven-point scale which means that the highest ranking countries are 1-1's while the lowest are 7-7's. This means that the index tries to measure between semi-democratic and semi-authoritarian regimes and fully authoritarian (7-7) and fully democratic ones (1-1). (Sørensen 2008).

The Freedom House Index classifies countries with the average rating between 1 and 2.5 to be free, those with an average between 3-5.0 as partly free, and those rating from 5.5-7 as not free.

However, as all the scholars using this survey point out, the measurement of democracy is highly complex and therefore imprecise (Fish 2005, Sørensen 2008). Freedom House estimates political rights and civil liberties in each country based on 7 points; the first three for political rights and the last four to measure the civil ones:

1) electoral processes, 2) political pluralism and participation, 3) functioning government. 4) freedom of expression and belief, 5) associational and organizational rights, 6) rule of law, and 7) personal autonomy. In all participants of this research are asked 29 questions which together creates the combination (Freedom House Index's checklist questions).

Moreover, measuring democracy based on this list and then ranking countries both are complex and difficult. As Georg Sørensen writes in his book *Democracy and Democratization*:

"The Freedom House questions illustrate the potential problems involved with measuring democracy. First, the problem of conceptualization what are the specific attributes of democracy and how are they related to each other? Second, the problem of best possible estimation or measurement of these attributes; third, the problem of aggregation, that is, of recombining the various measurers into an overall evaluation of democracy" (Sørensen 2008 p.19)

Furthermore, what is mentioned is the fact that even several of the countries which end up with the best ranking are very different from one another. For example the United States, Botswana, Denmark, Japan etc. all these have different political systems like parliamentary and two-party systems, political culture, socioeconomic environments and so on. What more is mentioned by some scholars is that the three dimensions; free, partly free and not free are insufficient for describing these differences. Especially when it comes to countries which have some but not all of the democratic features (Sørensen 2008).

Nevertheless, for analytical purposes Dahl's definition of democracy and his seven points make it possible, to a certain degree, to measure democracy based on the three dimensions: competition, participation and civil and political liberties. When a scholar tries to study the status of democracy in a given country these are the dimensions he or she looks at. Therefore the Freedom House Index is a good tool to use when trying to do so. Yet, the world is so complex that it maybe does not grasp every aspect of democracy (Sørensen 2008).

So, the main focus of the theory dealing with democratization, and democratic backlashes, is the changes in regimes. Either towards greater or lesser democracy. Now there is a debate inside the scholarly literature about the balance between external and internal explanations for the changes. However as Ambrosio, a scholar focused on external reasons for these changes, himself says; *"Certainly, a conducive domestic environment plays a necessary role in any democratic opening, transition, or consolidation. Without the proper democratic conditions within a country democracy will invariably fail. However, democratic outcomes are also heavily influenced by the international level"* (Ambrosio 2009 p. 11). So even if democratic processes can be influenced by external factors, what Ambrosio presents is precisely why this thesis mainly focuses on internal causes for a democratic backlash, and explanations for this.

2.3.1 Different approaches to failed democratization

In the parts above it has been established what features one looks for when trying to analyze whether a regime is a liberal democratic one. It has also been explained what is meant both by democratization and most importantly a democratic backlash. What will be presented now is theories trying to explain why such democratic backlashes happen, or which features that need to be established to secure a successful democratization process so that a regime can become a consolidated democracy.

2.3.2 Political culture and democratic backlashes

One of the approaches which deals with what is needed to complete and consolidate a democratization process is based on the need for a democratic culture. In other words, it is claimed that to have a successful process of democratization a country needs to establish a common democratic culture, if not one risks a backlash.

Furthermore, culture is a broad term, so I need to specify what is meant by a democratic culture. First, a culture can be said to be a common set of traditions, norms, history and language. And these traditions and norms shape both political and economical behavior in different societies. It has been said that socioeconomic development bring along systematic changes. However cultural traditions and norms do not disappear overnight. At the same time as economic prosperity is said to make it possible to predict changes in culture towards greater respect for liberal values, the opposite is said to account for economic collapse. (Inglehart and Welzel 2005 p. 20).

Political culture will in this case understood as the common traditions, beliefs and norms taken for granted in a country's political sphere, meaning how for example the political culture values the distribution of power in political life. Whether power is and should be divided equally between different institutions, or if all power should be centered around one man or institution. It does not mean that it has to be either equally distributed or only focused on one institution, however one of the aspects of political culture connected to the values of "power sharing", or I could even use the term balance of power in government. An example of two distinct political cultures could be the feudal society in Europe before the Peace at Westphalia, where all power was divided between several authorities including the king and the church; and after the Peace in Westphalia when all power was given to one sovereign (Ruggie 1993). Another example can maybe be the change of political culture when the kings

of Europe lost their "divine" right to rule as they pleased over their sovereign territories, while they lost power to popular rule and parliament. Moreover, after bloody revolutions like the French and the American the system which one identifies as the start of the modern democracy begun to develop.

A democratic culture could then be understood as a community which understands and respects basic democratic values. What constitutes as these democratic values could be debated, however, there is a broad consensus between many western scholars as to what these values are. They are in fact often connected to, or similar to the content in Robert A. Dahl's seven points mentioned earlier. A democratic culture could be seen as the respect for a strong civil society, a political society based on free and inclusive elections and the rule of law (Dahl, Linz & Stepan, Inglehart and Welzel). When both the population and the institutions of a country respects these values a stable liberal democracy can be developed.

Moreover, one of the points made by Inglehart and Welzel is that institutions which formally respect these values cannot alone guarantee that a country becomes democratic. Also the population needs to become one with the democratic culture and respect the value of self expression and other liberal and democratic values. We can maybe understand this in the way that there need to be a general respect both from the top and down, as well as bottom -up.

Furthermore, liberal democracy is unlikely to be established if it exists in a culture dominated by survival values. In other words if the common values prioritize values like; economic growth or military security, and therefore give less priority to democratic values they become subordinate and it will become easier for a charismatic leader to strengthen a authoritarian rule by use of such threat perceptions. So for a democracy to become consolidated there need to be a kind of a hermeneutic process where both the population and the institutions together create a democratic culture. One cannot be focused only on the elite- or institutions, because the public or masses are not only spectators in a democracy, and in a process leading towards it (Inglehart and Welzel p. 156 and p. 158). This also supports the theory that democracy cannot be externally imposed. For a democracy to get foothold in as "the only game in town" it needs to be internally owned, and if it does not a backlash may occur.

Nevertheless, what is mentioned above also strengthens the theory saying that a democratic culture cannot be created without socioeconomic development as well. Because without development logically the most important values, for the population and thus also for the

institutions, become what I in the paragraph above called survival values. But becoming a rich country does not alone create democracy; if it was so, oil-rich countries should have become democratic, and it is not the case. What is meant by mentioning socioeconomic development is that changes in economics can create different cultural needs, from what I called survival values to self-expression or liberal and democratic values (Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

Some explanations of democratic development presented by Huntington are based on; social, economic, and cultural factors. As he claims that these factors can all operate, often in conflicting ways, to either facilitate the creation of democracy or to sustain authoritarianism (Huntington 1991 p. 39). What I understand out of Huntington's reflections is that for example the existing culture within a regime, or a country, can prohibit the development of democracy. For example, if the tradition is that one man or woman rules, and he alone can announce the successor, then this can work against democratic development and sustain the old ways, which in turn results in a democratic recession and a full backlash.

What has been presented in this section of the thesis is that there are different political cultures, and some scholars claim that to reach a consolidated democracy, a democratic culture needs to be in place. This means that there needs to be a belief that democratic norms and traditions are the best way to rule a country. A democratic culture is then based values similar to Dahl's seven points, which cover free and fair election, electoral cycles, respect for the rule of law and a strong civil society and the possibility to a pluralistic political society. Yet, maybe the most important point in this section is that the culture needs to be adopted at all levels of society. If not democracy will lose its legitimacy and a democratic backlash will occur. There needs to be a "hermeneutic" relationship between the public or the mass population, the elites in society and in the institutions themselves, which means that all these parts of public life can affect and change one another.

2.3.3 Democratization, economic development and the possibility for a backlash

In this part of the theory chapter the thesis' focus will be on theory which tries to explain democratization and the failure to democratize connected to economic development. However, in this part it will also become clear that scholars do not agree on economic liberalization best leads to democratic development if it is done gradually or fast (shock-therapy).

Scholars like Burkhart and de Soysa have claimed that liberalization of the market has a stronger effect on democratization than the other way around (Fish 2005). They claim that opening up the economy for foreign direct investment has a positive effect on democracy and democratization. Moreover, they claim that this kind of investment is independent from factors like urbanization, historical and institutional factors. Burkhart and de Soysa claims that the poor countries have much to gain from interdependence between them and the rich ones. As I understand one of the major positive factors is that foreign investment brings with it wealth which otherwise would not be in the domestic economy (Burkhart and de Soysa 2003).

Economic development does also, according to Huntington, appear to promote democracy and democratization. In the case of increasing industrialization, society itself will become more complex and diverse which becomes difficult for an authoritarian regime to control. Moreover, economic growth creates wealth and power outside the state and the authoritarian elites, which give way for and creates demand from others to be part of decision making. An example of this could be the bourgeois and their part before and during the French revolution (Palmer, Colton and Kramer 2002).

However, this is connected to what can be seen as a change in the social structure of society. As already presented economic well being changes the values and attitudes of a country's citizens. If the citizens foresee economic development and the basic needs are met it increases interpersonal trust, life satisfaction and gives possibility to increase competence and education which in turn according to Huntington correlates positively with democratic institutions. (Huntington 1991).

Moreover, economic development promotes expansion of the middle class, which some see as an important feature of democracy. It is said that if there is no middle class there can be no democracy. Liberalization creates economic development, which again lead to a more highly educated public and a larger middle class, which again creates a civic culture based on trust, satisfaction and expertise, that last creates support for democratization (Huntington 1991 p. 69).

In a liberal market economy the basic model is based on an economy which transfer economic power from producers to consumers. In a basic model of such a market there is total openness, which means that information is available for everyone, the idea is that there will be several

small producers which compete for the same costumers in the market. This will keep the prizes low because the model claims this to be cost effective. Scholars that proclaim the need for liberalization in countries that go through a process of democratization think in the same terms when it comes to competition for political power (Åslund 2002).

Adam Przeworski calls this thinking Democratic Capitalism. What he means is that capitalism is a phenomenon based on exchange and a division of labor and capital in a system where production is oriented towards the needs of others. This is a system where the producers cannot survive without the consumers who will buy the product. Workers sell their labor to a producer who profits on the sale of the products. Competition is the most important word here. At the same time as one opens up for competition in the market, competition for power will begin because of the economic power given to the owners of capital. They will demand to have a say in government constraints and regulations over the market and the owners of capital (Przeworski 1991). Feudal society where political and economic power was the domain of the noble's and the church can serve as an illustration here. Every man was not equal in the eyes of God, nor were they equal in face of the law. However, when the feudal structures in Europe caved in, it gave way for other groups to be part of political and economical affairs. As the Americans said during their revolution against their English rulers, "No taxation without representation".

At the same time, during what I understand as a hermeneutic process where capital owners get more power over government decisions vis-a-vis the old political elites, the idea is that the middle class will demand to be heard as well. Creating a possibility for elites to run for elections and compete over the support of the middle class. The logic is based on the fact that the production, investment and profit are regulated by constraints given by the government, and it is through these constraints workers can pursue their interests. In a democracy, even in a democracy like Schumpeter describes, citizens can express their claims to goods and services. Even if citizens do not have immediate rights to the products produced, they can direct the organization of production through the political system, and the allocation of profit thorough government regulations (Przeworski 1985 p. 11). Moreover, if one thinks in these lines which Przeworski calls democratic capitalism; politicians, or elites, will compete for popular support in similar ways as producers compete for consumers.

Furthermore, if the government and its officials are in fact dominated by groups with more resources than others, then the middle class as presented above create and become the civil society. And during a fight against authoritarianism, or in case of a process of democratization these two parts of society, the owners of capital and the labor forces, need to be united. However, after the end of a repressing regime these two need to divide and become competitors. Nevertheless, there is a fine line in such a process because if they divide too early the outcome is likely to; *"repeat the experiences of South Korea, where the rivalry between two anti-authoritarian presidential candidates- rivalry that was personal but also regional and economic- permitted electoral victory for the candidate associated with dictatorship. If they do not divide at all, the new regime will be a mirror image of the old one: not representative, not competitive. This is the danger facing several European countries: that the revolution will end up being only anticommunist, not democratic"* (Przeworski 1991 p. 89).

To sum this all up, the theory says that to have a successful process of democratization there is a need to establish a market based on free trade and competition. This will remove power from the traditional elites and transfer it to an economic elite. Although, the traditional and the economic elite may actually be the same group, however opening the market up for new producers will create a possibility for a shift in power at least over time. Moreover, what I understand as one of the major points in Przeworski's analogy is that when creating a liberal economy the producers compete for consumers, this will be adopted by the political system, which allocates power to the middle class as they can demand to have their interests addressed. Allocation is the main focus here. I understand it as if there is no allocation of resources to other parts of society than the political elite, during a process of democratization, it will result in a backlash as all power stays in the same place as before.

Now there is a debate whether economic liberalization best is to be done gradually, or through what has come to be known as "shock-therapy". There are examples of both ways of doing it in the post-Soviet bloc. American scholars had the idea during the "third wave" that a leap to free market liberalization through "shock-therapy" would strengthen the transition and process towards democracy (Cohen 2000). *"In some countries rapid growth or economic recession forces regimes either to liberalize or intensify repression. Either way, both weakened authoritarianism"* (Huntington 1991 p. 59). And during a gradual process of democratization *"....groups as the military, traditional economic elites, and leading*

politicians may insist that the transition toward democracy include acceptance of a set of agreements or political pacts that define vital areas of interests for the elites" (Sørensen 2008 p. 70). It means that "In sum, various forms of elite domination may impede or even block further democratization" (Sørensen 2008 p. 74).

Moreover, Burkhart and de Soysa suggest that there is a strong positive connection between economic liberalization and democratization and that economical liberalization therefore is no enemy towards democracy. However, there are still scholars that believe that rapid economic liberalization, in the post-Soviet region, has rather had a negative effect on the process of democratization than the other way around (Fish 2005). This is because rapid economic reform has a negative effect on both popular rule and welfare. Rapid reforms often undermines representative institutions to carry the reform through, and thus democracy is weakened. As economic reforms are implemented from the outside, and forced upon the population, implementing them often hurts popular democracy in a stage of democratization, leading to for example authoritarian nostalgia. As shock-therapy and other rapid reforms are economically endured by the population (See Fish 2005, and Przeworski 1991).

One cannot start a process of democratization before the basic needs of the community are met. When people are suffering from hunger and disease, and are fighting just to stay alive, it is naive to think that they would achieve to consolidate a democracy. As Julius Nyerere the former president of Tanzania said, the struggle in Africa is freedom from poverty, hunger and disease (Sørensen 2008 p. 12).

The logic of shock-therapy is that if a government has eliminated all economic freedom and therefore all economic life is become a part of government, there is no financial base for a real political opposition. And political oppositions are in fact essential if a regime is to be called a democracy (Fish 2005 p. 156-157). At the same time, economic liberalization and a free market is thought to make grounds for the emergence of other relevant social phenomenon like class and class structure. This is something that scholars, from Marx, Engels, Linz and Stepan, Dahl and Przeworski, have seen as an important feature of democratization. No middle class or bourgeois no democracy. (Fish 2005 p. 157).

Furthermore, as an open economy lessens state control over its citizens, so too is it thought to lessen its control over political opposition. Because if there are funds available for a election campaign from the private sector; organizations, associations, and persons are less reliant of the state for money and other resources which lessen governmental political influence over the civil society.

In sum, the logic of rapid economical change is that it though the market the political sphere is opened up by allowing the formation of autonomous agents which are financially independent of the state and therefore can be the basis for a political opposition. So economic reform changes and creates political openness which strengthens the process of democratization, more than democratization in itself creates economic liberalization. (Fish 2005).

Criticism of reforms such as shock-therapy is that they can undermine the notion of democracy itself, and therefore destroy the process of democratization. Przeworski presents four possible outcomes: "*(1) Reforms may advance under democratic conditions, (2) reforms may be forced through by a dictatorship, (3) democracy may survive by abandoning reforms, and (4) both reforms and democracy may be undermined*"(Przeworski 1991 p. 138).

Moreover, what I understand all the scholars who deal with this approach to democratization agree upon, is that there is need for allocation of resources within a country which is going through a democratic transition. They would explain a democratic backlash based on the lack of allocation of economic power from the former power holders to new structures. to my understanding if there is no economic liberalization a backlash will occur based on the fact that the same power structure is maintained when or if all the economic resources still lay in the same hands as before because of a closely controlled system. Now, in this part of the thesis the bourgeois have been used as an example of new economic elites which allocated power outside of the old power structures. What I further understand is that liberalization of the economy and the creation of a strong middle class creates the possibility for a strong civil society to manifest itself because then it is not so dependent on resources from the government which in another system then can squeeze the mass population in to submission. Now, parallels between these points and to the process of democratization in Russia will be drawn, which again will serve as a tool to analyze the case of the Russian Backlash further on in the thesis.

2.3.4 Institutional problems, democratization and backlashes

The constitution is one of the most consequential and influential institutions in a country. It creates a set of rules that need to be followed when making laws, and it prescribes rights, protections as well as the division of power between other institutions in politics. It also shapes the distribution of power between citizens and the state (Fish 2005). That is why this part will present some theories on how different political systems can affect democratization and democratic recession. Further explain why political openness, competition and participation are connected to civil society, and how these things are connected to democratic backlashes.

How the power is divided is based on which democratic system the constitution lays grounds for. One often uses three different categories: parliamentarism, semipresidentialism (mixed system) and presidentialism. Moreover, the qualities of the different systems and their effect on democratization are debated. Yet, as the Russian constitution determines Russia to be a semi-presidency I turn more focus to this category and how it affects democracy.

Some scholars who advocate for parliamentarism, like Arend Lijphart, claim that this is the most democratic system. Under a constitution which favors parliamentary rule, the government is formed by the composition of the parliament. The prime minister exercises executive power, however, he or she answers to the parliament. This form for government is often seen as highly representative which means that the parliament looks like the people, either in ideological, ethnic or other terms. One of the main focuses from advocates for this form of government is that they are skeptical to unconstrained executive power, so in parliamentary rule the prime minister answers to the legislature. He or she only serves as long as he has the majority behind him or her, and if he or she loses this the prime minister can be dismissed (Fish 2005 p. 194 and Lijphart 2008).

Not unlike parliamentarism, presidentialism also has its advocates. They claim that presidentialism is favorable because in this system the parliament and the president are two independent entities. Because of the separation of power the two institutions have their own legitimacy and a constitutional ability to check and balance each other. However, the main argument used by advocates of presidency is that in time of crisis the president can be a powerful actor. As he or she is embodied and elected by the whole people he is an actor who has great legitimacy. A president is said to be more capable to act rapidly and more decisively

in time of need. He or she can do so because of his or hers legitimacy rise above social cleavages which can dominate in a parliament (Fish 2005 p. 195).

Semipresidentialism can be seen as having features from both parliamentary and presidential rule. It is said to combine three elements; first, the president of the republic is elected by the people in an independent election, second the president possesses quite considerable powers, and third apart from the president there is a prime minister and other ministers, who possess executive and governmental power given to them by support in the parliament. For a system to be a semi-presidency the president needs to have some minimum authority; however, the parliament and the ministers also need to have real executive and governmental power, which again is based on support from the parliament, not other institutions. Even if the president is the head of state, a semipresidential system implies that the parliament has actual parliamentary power and control over the government.

This can be achieved through either appointing ministers or at least having the right to reject or confirm ministers individually, and through this have a real say in the composition of the cabinet. Furthermore, it is crucial that the parliament may terminate the government if it loses the support of the parliament, without the parliament needing to risk their own seats. This means that the rejection of a government not necessarily triggers a new parliamentary election because this can make the legislators hold back which, in turn, reduces the parliament's power over the executive. Moreover, the parliament needs to have the right to investigate the president and the government, which also leaves room to monitor governmental agencies like the police, the military or other organs of state security (Fish 2005).

Thus, the idea is that a semipresidential system separates power where the parliament has some say over the government and reduces the risk of having a too powerful president. As well as the president can be a decisive voice in government as he is elected directly by the people and not based on the parliament and its composition. (Fish 2005 p. 195).

Moreover, the question then is: How are democratic systems connected to democratization and democratic backlashes? First of all, scholars claim that parliamentary systems and to some degree semi-presidential systems have more open politics, while presidential systems have less-open politics. This is connected to the fact that the parliament is the center of the national politics in the first two, while in a system like the American the president is the political centre. This again leads to less openness, and less participation from other political

actors and civil society. So in the case of choosing political institutions it can be claimed that facilitating most of the executive power in one institution can compromise democratization because it makes it harder for broader participation, especially when it comes to including minorities and their interests in politics. Nevertheless, M. Steven Fish in his analysis of the three different forms of democratic government suggests that which of the three systems one chooses in face of a transition towards democracy does not need to be decisive for the process. The most important aspect is that countries with stronger parliaments have done better, in a process of democratization, than those with weaker parliaments (Fish 2005). And as the parliament is composed by the population it can easily be recognized as the popular will, which strengthens the image of democratization and democratic transitions as a tool against a repressive governments which is brought down by the people (Huntington 1991).

Moreover, this brings us to the connection between political openness, power sharing and the civil society. The theory also assumes that to ensure political openness and democratization there is need for a civil society. There needs to be a possibility for people to organize themselves into interest organizations or groups. To demonstrate without being persecuted for having opinions that may be critical towards public policy. In other words there is need for a system which is open for a society that can be a force which checks and balances the political society so that it can prevent the system from becoming a dictatorship. Moreover, the assumption is that if these things are not in place one, can be sure of a movement towards lesser competition and participation, and therefore see signs of a democratic backlash taking place (Linz & Stepan 1996, Fish 2005, Huntington 1991 and Dahl 1971).

Furthermore, not having an open society, both in political and civil terms, will make it impossible to reach what was presented as the goal of a process of democratization; a consolidated democracy. Another word for this form of government is by Dahl called a Polyarchy, and if a system is not open for participation or competition it can never reach this goal. It can only then become what he calls a competitive oligarchy or an inclusive hegemony (see figure 2 in page 15). Moreover, such a system can at best become a democracy in accordance to the system which one can trace back to the political system of South- Africa during the apartheid regime. And it can only be sustained for so long before the system will experience a democratic backlash because it does not open for participation from other parts of society, as political openness is defined as having both competition and participation, but

also as having political and civil liberties. Not having all of these features of democracy can at best create what Inglehart and Welzel calls "sham" democracies, which I understand will experience regression because of the lack of participation or competition as the process as democratization stops.

SECTION C: Methods

3.1.1 Methods

This master thesis is based on qualitative content analysis, combined with an hermeneutic approach towards the content and context, as well as a conceptual analysis based on the discourse between different authors and their use of the same term (See Democracy and Democratization). As all the data used in this paper are written sources it will consist of qualitative research only. However, some of the data referred to is in fact quantitative surveys and indexes. Like for example Freedom House's index of freedom in the world. But I will not discuss the problems and difficulties connected to doing surveys and statistics in social science, what I will do is analyze the qualitative data, with use of the theories presented in Section A. As well as clarifying the usage of the concept democracy, democratization and democratic backlash.

The data I use is based on written sources like academic books, academic articles, an academic survey and newspaper articles. This means that I am writing my master thesis based on a review of documents and their content. Moreover, even if this is not a natural science study there is something or a phenomenon I am trying to shed some light on, based on explanations made by other scholars. The dependent variable in this study is therefore: the failure to democratize Russia– where as the independent variables are made up by the theories ,which try to explain why. I will look at some of these explanations and try to review what kind of explanatory power these have when I am using them on the case of Russia, or whether we need to use them all to understand this case of failed democratization or democratic backlash.

Furthermore, in some ways this paper not be so concerned with academia's focus on positivist knowledge. This means that I will not try to generalize and "isolate" my case in such a way as a natural scientist can do with his or hers experiments in a laboratory. As Robert Cox claims, the human world is complex and we can never account for all the variables (Cox 1981). So I will rather use a more historical and hermeneutic approach to my data. This means using different parts, and in this case different explanations, to understand the whole case. Trying to understand a part of history and the present day based on interpreting them through theories so that I may shed some new light on the democratization process and the democratic backlash in Russia.

What is more, I am not trying to put the Russian regime on a scale of “how democratic” it is, but rather using Dahl definition to determine whether or not Russia has moved from a political open system to a less open system. In order to do so, I will use Dahl's definition of liberal democracy.

So, as my method is mainly based on content analysis, I have used a model for doing a qualitative ethnographic content analysis (ETC) which I got from *Social research methods* by Alan Bryman, and a similar model or recipe from Kjeldstadli's chapter in *Metodisk feltarbeid*. These models gave me the steps which are needed by a researcher dealing with documents as his or hers data. Based on a combination between the two models gave me the following steps:

1) Generate a research question 2) Become familiar with the contexts which the documents are or were generated in. 3) Find a small number of documents which one should get extra familiar with. 4) investigate and decide on the credibility of the documents and the authors. 5) Generate categories which will guide the collection of data, and make it more accessible. (Bryman 2012 and Kjeldstadli 1997)

As for the hermeneutic approach, I have and will use what is called a critical hermeneutic approach in my analysis. This means that combined with the ETC I have collected data and theories which allow me to forge an understanding of the context as a whole based on different interpretations and explanations (Bryman 2012). In this case this means theories dealing with democratization and democratic backlashes, and then connected them to the case of Russia.

Moreover, this means that I continually interrogate the documents and their topics when extracting data to create knowledge. Bryman divides this into three moments of examination: 1) The social-historical moment, which is the moment the examination of the producer of the text, its intentional recipient, the context which the text are produced, transmitted and received in. 2) The formal moment, which is the moment when the formal analysis of the texts and its parts are done. 3) The interpretation- reinterpretation moment. This third part is the result of the other two parts; it is when a scholar puts the parts together and try to interpret the results. (Bryman 2012 p. 561). Furthermore, I understand these moments of examination as if there are several similarities between the ETC and the critical hermeneutic approach to qualitative data, which include the use of documents in research.

3.1.2 Dealing with documents

Documents do always have a content. And this content can be used to give an answer to a problem, however, there is a long distance between content and facts. What I mean is that even if something is claimed to be the truth, a social scientist needs to be critical towards all the different written truths. One example to clarify this can be:

"The devils existence is covered by a great many sources, but the usable data which a scientist can get out of those documents is based on which questions the scientist is asking. Today those documents (the Bible, Koran etc.) could probably not be used to determine the existence of Biblical figures. However it could be used to gain insight to the past's conception of the world" (translation of Duedahl and Jacobsen 2010 p.53).

This serves as an example of how one should be critical of written sources, and how they can be used to gain knowledge or facts. Because when writing scholarly one is supposed to be critical towards what one reads, and every paper is supposed to be suspected of unreliability, which one, by using a hermeneutic approach, decides whether or not one finds it reliable. (Duedahl and Jabobsen 2010).

Furthermore, when dealing with documents as the main sources for a study it has been argued that documents should be examined in terms of the context they were written in and who the implied readers are. Because documents are written in order to argue for one impression of reality, and it is in favor of the authors and those whom they represent. One of the central points here is that documents need to be seen for what they are. They are written with a purpose in mind, and not simply as a reflection of reality. They are written by someone who interprets reality, which again is interpreted by the reader of the text. This means that there is a significant process of communication between a sender, a message, and a receiver. (Kjeldstadli 1997, Bryman 2012).

Moreover, connected to my thesis a similar problem in dealing with documents and their place in reality are in fact present with the kind of sampling that I have used. The sample has a tendency to represent information which is part of the same dominating culture. Even if the categories which I made serve as a label of academic area for these different scholars, they all come from the same narrative or paradigm. What I mean is that even if they have different views of what the best way to ensure that the democratic transition is completed without a

democratic backlash is, all of the literature is part of the western world's narrative. This means that it is part of the tradition which see for example democracy as the only legitimate form of government. Moreover, as most of it comes either from western literature during the Cold War, or the aftermath of it, one has to be aware that it is not value free at all (Thagaard 2006). This is part of what is known as confirmability which I will come back to in part 3.4.1.

Moreover, when dealing with documents as a source of information it has been argued that documents should be viewed as linked to other documents because they often are a response to or/- and refer to other documents. These earlier documents can thus be seen as the context or background for the latter documents one uses in the research. In this thesis the book by Sørensen: *Democracy and Democratization* and its connection to *Polyarchy* by Dahl can serve as an example of what is tried to be explained above. This kind of connection is sometimes referred to as "inter-textuality". (Bryman 2012 p. 555).

3.3.1 Interpretation as science

As a social scientist much of our findings are in fact often based on interpretation. Even if one does quantitative research a scholar often needs to interpret the results. A document analysis or review will ultimately in the end depend on how good the quality of the documents are in context to the phenomenon one as a researcher is trying to explain (Duedahl and Jacobsen 2010). Nevertheless, in this thesis the documents all are part of the same discussion which is: how do we understand democratization and democratic backlashes? Moreover, books and articles, both academic and from newspapers, are a good source of getting in to a debate about a certain topic. (Kjeldstadli 1997).

Yet, it is important to be aware of the fact that when I am doing this kind of research, I am using an inductive method rather than a deductive one. This means that I have not formulated a problem statement which I am trying to falsifying, prove wrong, through for example statistical data or observation. I am using an inductive method where I am looking for confirmation of my topic. I already at the start accept that Russia has had a democratic backlash, and then go on finding theories which try to explain why such backlashes can occur, or at least what is assumed to be needed to create a consolidated democracy. Then I use these theories to analyze my data, not falsifying it rather verifying it. So I am trying to gain knowledge through experience rather than through no experience, which means that I am

looking for, and emphasizing, signs of a democratic backlash rather than signs of an increase in democracy.

Nevertheless, some scholars would say that this kind of research does not make it less valid than research done using the quantitative methods, in for example the field of natural sciences. In a debate in the philosophy of science some talk about experiential realism. This is not connected to experiments but experience. The term is connected to theories that claim that if we accept that there is a form of independent truth out there which is independent of us, then we need to use our body and mind to gain knowledge of it. We then use our body as a vessel for gaining knowledge and experiences. This includes the mind, our brain and our senses as well. What this means is that if there in fact is an objective world out there, we need to go and experience it, and this can only be done by using our body and mind, regardless of methods. (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007 p.54.)

In some ways we can connect this kind of thinking to David Hume and empiricism. Empiricism is a theory of knowledge which says that knowledge only comes from our experiences. In this respect human knowledge is only possible to gain based on the ideas we make based on our experiences, cause and effect.

Moreover, Hume is known for his theory about causality and induction. Hume is critical towards the concept of a causal explanation which can be free from experience or impressions. His example is that when a billiard ball hits another we experience a cause and effect. However, we can only experience that first A rolls, that A hits B, and that B starts to roll. This creates an idea that A causes B to roll, and through repeated experiences we get the impression or expectation that every time A hits B, B will start to roll. This cannot create an objective law, and we cannot be sure that every time A hits B, B will start to roll. However, we can expect that, based on our former experiences which have given us knowledge and expectations. (Skirbekk and Gilje 2007) With this in mind one can maybe accept that even though this thesis is not based on quantitative research, one can maybe accept that it can create ideas, impressions and expectations about what can cause democratization to fail or succeed. As this is a case study I cannot create an objective law, however if there are several similar studies they together can create an expectation of what will come to be in a process of democratization based on certain criteria. As the world is complex these may not be the best explanations forever, yet it can be a good starting point.

This brings us to the arguments for taking a hermeneutic approach to the case and the data. Writers like Gadamer, Habermas and Dilthey claim that interpretation is an important feature in the social sciences. (Taylor 2001 p. 239). It is to some degree relevant that a hermeneutic approach tries to make an object, be it a case, a text, a picture or something else, which to some degree is unclear understandable. With this in mind, what Charles Taylor claims is that for a hermeneutic process to be successful it needs to have made an interpretation which makes a case clearer and more understandable than it was before. And what makes it correct? Well the answer Taylor comes up with is that what was seen as incomprehensible now is understandable (Taylor 2001).

Furthermore, a thesis like this one, based on a content analysis, need to take the form of a discussion, this is because the reader becomes part of the discussion. He or she will be convinced or remain unconvinced on basis of the arguments written in the text. This is why when working with this kind of data (texts) I try to make the reader see the thesis as a whole at the same time as I refer him or her back to the different parts. In this respect they become part of my hermeneutic approach: first starting with a presentation of the case, then taking them through the different parts, which becomes the whole text. Where hopefully they get a better understanding of the whole case after reading all the parts. The idea is using the parts to analyze and understand the overall case, which is the essence of the hermeneutic circle (Taylor 2001).

3.4.1 Trustworthiness and authenticity

Some scholars have suggested that qualitative studies should be judged by other criteria than quantitative studies. Rather than evaluating it on their relation to reliability and validity they should be judged on the trustworthiness and authenticity of the sources based on four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman 2012).

Credibility has to do with whether or not the conclusion the researcher has arrived at is credible. This is done by establishing credible findings which is carried out through the proper practice. Furthermore, the credibility can be investigated by for example using a technique called triangulation. Triangulation means using more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomena, it can be by using several observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies (Bryman 2012). I will return to this issue in the next part of this chapter.

Transferability is connected to the context in which the research is done. It is based on giving rich accounts and details of the context where the research is done, so that others can refer to it as a database for judging the possibility for transferring of findings to another case or context. This is especially important to qualitative studies because they are often carried out on small groups or individuals (Bryman 2012). So, to deal with this I try to give as much background information about the case as I find relevant, and I try to use numerous examples when dealing with the data I have collected.

Dependability has bears similarity to reliability. It consists of keeping a complete record of all the research, all the data and all the sources of information which a researcher has used, in such a manner that others can review it. Moreover, so that peers then can act as auditors who can both review the content and check if the proper procedures have been followed. (Bryman 2012). In this thesis this means that I keep a record of all the written sources which I use and refer to as either theory or data.

Confirmability has to do with ensuring that one is aware that complete objectivity is impossible when doing social research, so the researcher has to show that he or she has acted in what Bryman calls good faith. This means not allowing personal values to manifest and affect the findings of a research (Bryman 2012).

3.4.1 Authenticity and Credibility

According to Duedahl and Jacobsen the documents one wants to use to solve a problem have to be considered based on four criteria: their authenticity, credibility, representativeness and their connection to the problem statement which one is trying to solve. This bears similarity to what Bryman claims to be the case as I presented in the part above about trustworthiness. How I chose to deal with these terms will now be reflected upon (Duedahl and Jacobsen 2010 p. 55 and Bryman 2012).

Authenticity means that the document is in fact what it claims to be. That it is not manipulated or falsified. Credibility is a criteria one needs to consider as well. To find out if a source of information is authentic and credible one can look for sign of quality. For example when reading academic texts one can see what publishing company is used and which research institution the author comes from. Is it a renowned institution like Harvard, Cambridge etc? And also if other scholars have referred to it, used it in their own work, or if the author of a document is a well known one. The same goes for the document itself.

Furthermore, as a scholar using written data it is important to be aware that texts are not produced without an agenda. For example newspaper articles are written by journalists, which means that they are often ordered, and reviewed by an editorial line. It is for example not unusual in Norway to divide newspapers according to traditional and historical political sympathies. And as I use Norwegian articles as data in my analysis I need to be aware that they are not value free, as part of a liberal democratic tradition, as well as historically being part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the direct opponent to the Soviet Union and Russia. This means that I as a student from Norway can live in what Kuhn calls a paradigm, a different view of the world, than what a student from for example Russia may have. (Duedahl and Jacobsen 2010). This can both be connected to what Taylor says about texts, and Brymans terms confirmability and credibility.

Moreover, it could be important to understand why I have chosen to attack this topic in the way I have. As mentioned I am a Norwegian student which means that Norwegian is my first language. I do not speak Russian which prevents me from reading Russian newspaper articles or books. With the resources I have available this meant that I had to continue only using data from western academic and non-academic works.

Furthermore, because the thesis is based on interpretation it can be good to find several sources which claim the same, yet without basing it on the exact same sources. This is part of how one can triangulate data. However, as a student at the master level this can be hard to do because of the limited time and resources available. It takes a lot of time to find, read and review all the different documents, and therefore I have found some main sources which debate democratization and democratic backlashes directly and indirectly, with focus on different explanations.

Moreover, in some ways I would call my collection of data similar to snowball sampling. With this I mean that I chose the different books and articles based on references from different authors. As an example when I used the University library at the University of Tromsø and searched for books on democratization I found the book *Democracy and Democratization* written by Sørensen. He referred me to Huntington and Dahl and so on. Moreover, as these two authors are well known in the academic circles, and therefore I feel that these are credible and trustworthy sources. This means that I in other books I was critically looking for references to the same renown authors to identify their credibility.

As well as this, I triangulated books that referred to other well known data sets, like Freedom House's survey Freedom in the World, where they measure political freedom, openness and civil and political liberties. As well as looking for references to the Polity datasets which are a statistical base connected to war between countries. Doing this helped me in determining both the credibility of books, but also the credibility of the data given from Freedom House.

However, as I said before, my choice of credible books was also based on which publishing company and where the scholars had worked (For example Yale, Cambridge etc.). Moreover, I also looked for authors that were referred to and debated in books that were not their own. Like in M. Steven Fish's book he debates economic liberalization based on the debate between scholars in favor for rapid change and people against it: Burkhart and De Soysa vs. Przeworski and also Cohen. This debate referred me to their books so that I could look it up and decide for myself if I agree with Fish's interpretation. This is important when doing academic research in the social sciences so that it is possible for others to go to the same sources and reach the same conclusions, which is connected to what Bryman calls dependability. This is why it can be important to consult the primary source rather than the secondary source. In my case this meant for example reading Huntington and Dahl instead of taking for granted that what Sørensen claimed was true.

All these different authors I have referred to and used in my research have different perspectives on democratization, and the criteria needed to consolidate a process towards democracy. Which I in turn interpret and use as features to look for when determining if there has been a movement towards greater or lesser democracy, hence a democratic backlash. This is why I have divided them into three explanatory categories like it was advised by the different methods connected to doing qualitative research. These categories have also been divided in too the different parts of my theory chapter: Political culture and democratic backlashes, democratization, economic development and the possibility for a backlash and Institutional Problems, democratization and backlashes.

So, in some ways one can maybe claim that I have used books as my informants like other students use interviewees as their informants when it comes to snowball sampling. To some degree I have the same procedure for choosing my sources of information. What I am trying to say is that I first found a few sources with the features or qualities which I wanted to use. Thereafter these informants gave me the names of other documents with the same type of

qualities and content. And in some ways this can work as a triangulation which creates even more credible information.

Nevertheless, this method poses a certain problem which I to some degree have and will discuss connected to this approach to the data. In fact this can create a sample of information which is part of the same side of the discussion, or part of the same network. To counteract this I tried to find authors who had different views and opinions on what best works to avoid democratic backlashes, and therefore I assumed them to be part of another network of scholars, or at least not so intertwined. This is to try and keep some kind of confirmability, so that I can claim to have been at least as objective as it was possible when doing research like this. And it also made my MA more in line with what Bryman calls Transferability giving rich details of the context with several references for the readers to look up. So, the analogy in using the snowball method is that one starts with a small sample of informants, which gradually expand like a snowball will when it rolls. (Thagaard 2006 p.54)

3.1.5 Representativeness

When doing a document analysis it is important to critically review if the sources are in fact able to represent what one are trying to answer. Sometimes when doing a qualitative analysis one can experience that a source that was regarded as a good source of information some years ago may not be considered to be one today. For example when doing a document analysis it is important to find out if the terms used were used in the same way before as they are today. In other words a term or a concept may not contain the same meanings today as it did before. (Duedahl and Jacobsen 2010). One of the main terms or concepts which I use in this thesis is the concept of democracy, and it is clear that it needed to be clarified what I mean when I use the term in this thesis. What I also found through a small content analysis of the term democracy is that the same term can have many meanings and take many forms. In other words, it became clear that one cannot take for granted that they mean the same as me. As presented in the SECTION B of this thesis the term democracy is not value free, as a term never can. Some scholars regard voting as the most important part of democracy, like from the ancient Greek, whereas others claim that there is more to the term. What also became clear is that some scholars now talk about "sham" democracies, which means that some regimes hide under the name of democracy, despite having only some characteristics of what

is meant when talking about liberal democracy, which is seen as the most legitimate form of democracy today.

Furthermore, I tried to show that when doing a content analysis the goal is to understand the content of a text which one wants to use as a tool for their analysis, or as data in it. Because texts are part of the human sphere it is always through language and interpretation that we get knowledge about these. Yet, this means that there will always be room for error as well because a document contains at least three different meanings: The writers meaning, the text itself, and the readers interpretation. Nevertheless, even if the texts never are value free they can represent an understanding of reality which can serve as valuable insight. But therefore it is also important to be clear when it comes to what one means when using terms, like for example democracy. (Duedahl and Jacobsen 2010).

Moreover, as presented earlier in this thesis the theories which I use are not directly focused on democratic backlashes, but rather on what needed to have a successful democratization process. For me this meant that I had to reverse this thinking from looking for features of success to the lack of these features. This means that I have to be aware that the theories which I use are not necessarily meant for the purpose which I use them for.

Something also has to be said about the main sources of data which I use in this thesis. I mainly use three different academic sources of data, as well as one non academic source. The first academic one is the Freedom House index: Freedom in the World which is a tool that can give insight in to the democratic trends in the world, in accordance to Dahl's notion of democracy. As well as using this index from Freedom House, I also use their country report which deals with the democratic trends within a specific country, in this case Russia. I found this a credible source as it does research based on the democratic criteria similar to Dahl, and it is as well being referred to by several of the scholars which I use in the theory chapter.

The second main source is Hønneland and Jørgensen's book *Moderne Russisk Politik* which gives a rich account of both the political history of Russia, and of how the Russian institutions are organized and how power is divided between the different governmental institutions. The book is published by a company publishing several scholarly books which I therefore found the book credible. As well as the authors are scholars from the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansens Institutt which helped me in this respect.

The third main source of data I use is M. Steven Fish and his book *Democracy Derailed in Russia* which give insight on both economical data on Russia, as well as data on the situation of the civil society in Russia. I judged this source according to similar criteria as the second source, as the book is published by Cambridge University Press, and as Fish has been among other things an associate professor at Berkeley.

Nevertheless, as these three main sources are all academic books I also use several newspaper articles which cover recent events in Russia. Nevertheless, these are not scientific articles and cannot be judged as trustworthy and credible in the same way as the academic books. However, as two of the elections which I focus on in this thesis have just been completed (December 2011 and March 2012) it has been difficult to find scholarly articles which cover this topic. As scholarly articles are products of a much longer process of editing and judgment. This is why I have used several articles from *Aftenposten* which I find to be the best Norwegian newspaper when it comes to foreign affairs.

Furthermore, for my thesis this will mean that what some of the newspaper articles and data collected not necessarily represent the present day in Russia. However, because they reflect the same reality as what I have found in the rest of my sources I consider them to be representative too. Thus the sources I then refer to as my main sources are ; the academic books as well newspaper articles from *Aftenposten*, and the Freedom House's surveys.

SECTION D: Empirical data and analysis.

Just to remind the reader, what I will try to answer with the use of the theories presented above are the following questions: *When scholars around the world now talk about the Russian democratization process, they talk about a "Russian Backlash". - 1) What is meant by this? 2) What are the main explanations of the phenomenon? 3) And how do these explanations together contribute to our understanding of the Russian case?*

To answer these questions I will use some of the concepts and the theories which were presented in the theory chapter. I will start by arguing what is meant by a Russian backlash based on the concept of democratization.

To answer the most important questions: "What are the main explanations " and "How do the explanations together contribute to our understanding of the Russian case" I will discuss the data in light of the different theories on democratization and democratic backlashes.

I will start by analyzing the democratic backlash in light of the economic theory with a special focus on whether the economic reforms created a middle class system in Russia, which are seen by the theory as an important condition for a country trying to become more democratic. And then I will discuss how one can explain the democratic backlash if this condition is not in place. Then I will go on to analyze how institutional problems, restrictions of political and civil liberties connected to electoral fraud and state control over media coverage can contribute to our understanding of the Russian backlash. After that I will move on to discuss how the political development, examined through the lens of what I have called political culture, can explain the democratic recession in Russia during the 1990s and 2000s.

Together with data and theory, I will try to reflect on what I have found through this process of writing this thesis. As Dahl's definition of democracy has been important up to this point in this thesis, I will also base the analysis on it. Therefore I also find that it could be fruitful to shortly look on whether the Russian system, today, fits in to this definition, or not. Moreover, the last part of SECTION C will reflect upon the different theories and their explanatory power, and with the intention of answering the last question, how they together can contribute to an wider understanding of the whole case through a more hermeneutic or holistic approach.

4.1.1 An introduction to Russia's political development

During the 1990's it became common to categorize and grade regimes according to the levels of democracy. This was used to compare cases of democratization (Pridham 2001). On most surveys used by scholars doing research on democracy and democratization, the starting point of the research is often "how democratic, or what degree of democracy one can find" or "how authoritarian" a regime is. One of these surveys is the Freedom House Index which rates countries based on similar criteria as Dahl. This survey is a tool to look at the shifts and trends in Russia and its democracy.

Moreover, as presented by the Freedom House Index: Freedom in the World, something changed in Russia after the reign of Boris Yeltsin ended and the new reign of Vladimir Putin began. Several scholars now talk about a "Russian Backlash", and Freedom House has degraded the Russian regime from "Partly free" to "Not Free", based on the trends from 2004-2007.

According to the Freedom House Index, a partly free country is one in which there is a limited respect for basic political rights and civil liberties. A partly free country can operate within a political climate where there is corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic and religious conflicts, and all this in a political environment where a single party dominates political life even if there is a certain degree of pluralism. A not free country is one where basic political rights are absent, and basic civil liberties are systematically denied (Freedom House Index: Freedom in the world p.6). As mentioned in the theory chapter, there are seven points which are meant to estimate and describe or characterize changes in regimes. These points are based on 29 questions posed to the participants whom takes part in the research, which cover the topics: 1) electoral processes, 2) political pluralism and participation, 3) functioning government. And as for the civil liberties: 4) freedom of expression and belief, 5) associational and organizational rights, 6) rule of law, and 7) personal autonomy (Freedom House Index's checklist questions). How Russia, and the regime there, scores worse today on these indicators will be elaborated later during the next parts of the thesis.

Moreover, as presented in the theory chapter, a country can be said to be undergoing a process of democratization when there is an increase in competition and/or participation. As presented by Dahl's figure one can say that there is a process of democratization when there is movement towards a "polyarchy". To some extent one can claim that there was movement

towards greater democracy in Russia after the end of the Soviet Union. During the 1990's Russia underwent systematic changes, liberal changes which gave room for pluralism and participation and an electoral process with regular elections. Yet, during the late 1990's these changes were reversed. Now, it is hard to claim that Russia is less open today than during the Cold War. However, what is meant by a Russian Backlash is a regression when it comes to the democratic process in Russia. From an increase in competition and participation in politics, the Russian regime has become a system where basic political rights and civil liberties have been systematically denied during the last decade, as presented by Freedom House.

Nevertheless, this brings us to the next part of this thesis. With the use of the theories presented earlier I will now attempt to explain why such a backlash has occurred. To this end , I will use the theories on the data which I have collected through books and articles. And then see how they can help me understand how and why this has resulted in the Russian regime being degraded from "Partly Free" to "Not Free" on the Freedom House Index's scale.

4.1.2 The Soviet Heritage

The Soviet Union was to some degree a totalitarian state and today we can talk about a more open Russia than at that time in history. It could be said that the difference between today's system in Russia and the one in the Soviet Union is that nowadays there are multiple actors that create the country's policy, as well as several parties, greater respect for the rule of law, and more liberty for the citizens. The Soviet regime was less open because most of the policy and power was centered at the position as general secretary and leader of the communist party. Paradoxically the Soviet system had some characteristics we associate with a democratic system; they had elections and representative bodies. However, these elections were not free in the sense we think of elections as free in the western democracies. People had to vote by law, and they could only vote for one candidate. And it is said that the elected bodies did little else than formally approve of decisions that were already made in the communist party. The real power was in the party itself, and most power was vested in one position, which has gone by many names, and which in these days goes by the title of president (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006).

In the introduction it is mentioned that after the end of the Cold War the world could see a new "wave" of democratization, especially in the former parts of the Soviet Union or behind

the “Iron Curtain” as a part of the Warsaw-Pact. Among these were Russia, the biggest and most central country in the Soviet Union and the communist bloc. With the collapse of the Soviet Union the Russian Federation emerged as a separate state. Under its new leader and president, Boris Yeltsin, Russia tried to go “westwards” which consisted in trying to make the political system more democratic and changing the economy towards a liberal market. In other words, it actually involved going from one political- and economical- system to a radically different one, namely from a communistic form of government and a planned economy towards a democratic government based on a liberal market. Yeltsin and his advisers tried to implement these changes through the use of shock therapy on the economic and political realm.

Nevertheless, even if the change of policy gave hope and promise for democracy to Russians, with help from western advisers, Russia experienced an economic crisis in the late 1990s. With the collapse of the ruble in August 1998, Russians yearned from greater governmental spending and state control. One year later Yeltsin appointed Vladimir Putin as the country's new prime minister as his term was about to expire in 2000, and as, in line with the constitution of 1993, he himself was not eligible to run for president for the third time after serving two executive periods as president. As predicted by many, Putin became president in Russia after Yeltsin's period expired. (Ambrosio 2009, Freedom House: Country Report 2012).

4.2.1 The backlash seen in light of the economical development in Russia.

After the end of the Cold War Russia went through a systemic transition from a communist government towards a democratic form of government based on a free market. President Yeltsin, along with his advisers, tried to do this through what has come to be known as “shock-therapy”. As presented in the part of the theory chapter dealing with democratization and economic development, there were several assumptions concerning what would happen if there was an economic transition towards a more liberal economy.

Based on the theory I would expect to find several features during the era of democratization: an increase in private production which creates an independent centre of power vis-à-vis the political power, and a rise and expansion of a strong middle class which will demand to be heard through organizing themselves. In a way politics would be affected by a consumer model, and therefore I argue that one should find signs of a strong civil society in Russia if the

democratization process was proceeding successfully. Moreover, as the economic theory focuses on the allocation of resources away from governmental control, I argued in the theory chapter that a lack of allocation will result in signs of a democratic backlash.

During the communist era the private sector was minimal or almost inexistent. Almost all commerce was controlled by the state. There was no room for a financial base of opposition because all resources were controlled by the government. And the thinking was that with the use of shock-therapy and economic liberalization private production and a middle class would emerge in Russia (Fish 2005 p. 156).

Furthermore, the thought is that having a political opposition is an important feature, if not essential, for democracy itself. The idea that the shock therapists shared, was that in a country like Russia, that is with a long history of economic statism, a rapid liberalization would open doors for pluralism. Furthermore, this pluralism would create a class structure which would make room for a middle-class in Russia. This would ensure competition for political power and participation from the mass population.

However, even if people talk about Russia carrying out shock therapy, M. Steven Fish claims that it did not do so: "*First, Russia did not carry out shock therapy. Its economic reforms have been a hodgepodge of half measures and schemes that have little to do with shock therapy. Second, rapid economic liberalization is not bad for democracy*" (Fish 2005 p. 158).

Moreover, I will try to show why Fish claims it to be so. What Fish says is that already in the Gorbachev era there were reforms which were meant to liberalize the Russian economy to a certain degree. First, there was a relaxation on the ban on private enterprise which opened the economy for small-scale private businesses. Second there was a law which took away the ban on foreign investment in Russia. These two together made it possible to start up private production. While the third and maybe most important reform was the implementing of a law dealing with state enterprises. This law opened for these state enterprises to be self-managed. It was designed to get these major businesses to act and operate like others do in a market economy. Yet, the problem with these new laws, as highlighted by Fish, is that the managers were told to act like capitalists without having the possibility to actually be capitalists. This is because there were no profit motive as market prices still were controlled, and the right to hire or dismiss employees was not present in the communist system. There was no consumer model. (Fish 2005 p. 161).

This ambivalence and the collapse of the Soviet Union caused Yeltsin to inherit an economy in ruins. People lacked basic goods and services as the distribution of these had evaporated with the collapse of the Soviet system. The inflation rose to 160 percent, something had to be done and the answer was shock therapy. As economic reform, or shock therapy, meant; free markets, the end of the Soviet consumer and welfare subsidies, privatization of Russian state enterprises, and a minimal role of government (Cohen 2000). This was going to reduce the size of the government budget deficit, by clearing out the obstacles for private business activity. The shock therapists wanted to undertake a deregulation which was to open for private producers and sellers to operate freely in Russia. As well as this deregulation meant carrying out a large scale privatization of state owned enterprises. All this was to stimulate the economy for rapid growth and the creation of a middle class system which would make it impossible to go back to communism and authoritarianism. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that a major part of the political elites supported the gradualist approach when it came to the liberalization of the economy and the political system (Fish 2005).

In January 1992 the government in Russia opened the free market economy. Moreover, through a lens of the theory connected to democratization and its connection to economic development, this liberalization was supposed to create a complex society which made it more difficult for an authoritarian control. What the shock therapists tried to do was to lay the foundations for economic growth in the private sector which in turn ensured that power was separated from the state apparatus. This meant that production was to be moved to the public as the state was to facilitate the possibility for production rather than the production itself. This meant allocation of resources, in order to ensure a movement towards a western democracy. And at this time I would argue that there was a movement towards greater democracy.

However, the old elites from the communist era still had political power, and the directors of the major enterprises had strong support in the opposition. And even if the plan of the shock therapists was to create a liberal market, Yeltsin's government reversed several aspects of the liberalization already at the beginning of the shock therapy by for example freezing prices on oil and gas. As unemployment rose in Russia during this period pressure from the powerful opposition became strong, so strong that Yeltsin in the end of 1992 no longer supported the shock therapists. This meant that the shock therapy in Russia ended within less than a year.

Furthermore, the major deregulation of the state enterprises and the large-scale start up of small businesses never happened as intended. Cohen claims that what really happened was that the whole political struggle in Russia between 1992 and 1998 was between different actors trying to get control over the state's assets. It was not about democracy and market reforms. (Cohen 2000 p.17) The actors of this struggle were the supporters of the old regime and the actors who can be identified as the new government. It is also said that during Yeltsin's period as president Russia had the most arbitrary regulation in the world which resulted in bribes becoming an institutionalized or normal part of doing business in Russia (Fish 2005 p. 164-165).

Furthermore, large-scale privatization took place, however, not the type which was intended by the liberals in power at the start of the Yeltsin era. What happened was that the sitting management in the different major enterprises ended up acquiring the formal ownership of the enterprises which they managed during the end of the communist era. Actually two thirds of the privatized enterprises became the property of their sitting managers. Moreover, what was private, half private and public became unclear (Fish 2005 p. 167). So what Yeltsin's shock therapy brought with it was corruption and a power structure which was similar to the old one. The economic elites stayed and became even more powerful. Yes, one could say that moving ownership away from state meant allocating resources away from the political government. However, it did not create a model where the producers were in need of consumers who would buy their product.

No matter how long a road Russia had to be reformed and be in a transition from communism to free market capitalism and democracy. And practitioners of this theory had little use for taking into account Russia's history, culture and popular attitudes (In the mass population). Because the idea was that Russia should forget and destroy the old way of doing politics in Russia. Destroying the old political structure. But did the so called economic shock treatment work out this way? No. (Cohen 2000 p.36).

What happened in Yeltsin's period as president was that the managers who got the formal ownership over the major enterprises became an independent power entity. They became so wealthy that they are now known as oligarchs.

During Yeltsin's period some of them founded his political campaign in 1996 which in reality made him "theirs". So the oligarchs got huge political power in Russia, and had a say in nearly every aspect of the political life. In this period when the oligarchs had a major influence in the political life one could maybe argue that the private sector became powerful, and therefore a centre for power outside the political society like predicted and wanted by the

shock therapists. Yet, the distinction between the public and the private sphere became unclear. The fact that the oligarchs often had been directors of their enterprises did not help in this respect. Moreover, the fact that they got more to say in national politics than political institutions I would argue weakened the Russian democracy rather than strengthened it.

This period in the history of Russia is by some seen as a economic and political chaos, and this is what is still being used as rhetoric by Putin's supporters. When Putin became president of Russia he centralized both economic and political power. He seized strategic resources, both economic and political ones. One of the strategic resources which has attracted the attention of the Russian regime's critics is that the Kremlin in reality has full control over the state's media.

Moreover, it has to be said that Putin did not seize control over the independent media either by force or because of a popular demand. Rather, he did it because no one could stand up to him. He had weakened or neutralized the other powerbases mainly represented by the economically powerful oligarchs (Freedom House: Country Report 2012).

After the ended shock therapy and the end of the liberal project it is possible to identify that in today's Russia Putin and his new reforms have put restraints on private meddling in official affairs. He did so when he centralized both the economical and political power in Russia after Yeltsin stepped down and the Ruble collapsed in 1998. What is important is that during this period, as Cohen highlights, Russia was dominated by a fight between different actors for economic and political power, rather than concerned with creating a political system based on political and economical competition. Thus, the private sector has not become the independent power structure as predicted.

Furthermore, the economical shock therapy never created a political competition like the economic theory predicted. Maybe because the economical reforms were stopped within a year, we will probably never know. What is important is that the middle class never gained a foothold and became an important entity or actor, so that there was no strong civil society to balance the political power when Putin became the president of Russia. And no one could therefore stand up against the centralization of strategic resources in the country after 1998.

"Democratization in the post communist region, including Russia, has been derailed behind closed doors, not in the streets"(Fish 2005 page. 187).

Moreover, based on the economic theory, I expected to find several features which would ensure the process of democratization in Russia during and after the liberalization of the Russian market. These were composed by an increase in private production, which would create an independent centre of power vis-à-vis the political power, and a rise and expansion of a strong middle class which will demand to be heard. However, because of the ambivalence and the internal power struggle during the period of economic liberalization this never happened in Russia. Instead the Russian society rather underwent had a democratic recession as the political society centralized power and increased governmental control. This restricted the possibility to compete and participate in the political arena and the possibility for personal autonomy, and are presented by the demotion from "Partly free" to "Not free" by the Freedom House Index.

Nevertheless, during the 1990s it became possible to identify an aspiring middle class in the Russian society. Compared to other countries it is still small, yet increasing, and scientists claim that when it grows it will bring about bigger democratic changes. It is important to remember that the middle class such as one think of it in the western democracies, did not come over night but developed through decades. (Aale 2011).

Yet, even if one today can identify a growing middle class in Russia the civil society has not become a force outside of the political society. It is mainly facilitated in the bigger cities in Russia; it has not spread throughout the vast country (Tjønn 2011). In Russia the civil society does not represent a big part of the balancing force towards the government. In light of the economic development it could be argued that this lack of a civil society as a force could be because of the economical ambivalence which one have been witnessing during the 90's and onwards. Even if we can talk about the rise of a civil society in the 1990s and onwards to the beginning of this millennium, because of the arbitrary economical reforms in Russia civil society never became a platform for political power like the way one connect it to be in the rest of Europe (Fish 2005, Freedom House: Country report 2012). What I am trying to say is that if the economic strategy was to create a middle class and a economical power outside the political elites this never happened. When one use the theory of economical development and democratization as a lens analyze the Russian case it becomes clear that the middle class in Russia has not become like the bourgeois, because of the lack of allocation of resources. As the shock therapist's goal was to create a structure to check and balance the government, this has not been realized in today's Russia. The mass population is still dependent on the states

resources and cannot stand on its own feet, as the government rather has tightened control over strategic resources, which has resulted in a recession from more liberalization and competition during the first part of the Yeltsin era.

Nevertheless, interestingly enough, if one looks at the Russian economic system during the time of the shock therapy and onwards it could be possible to claim that today's Russia is in fact economically more open than it was during the Soviet era. The Russian system is open for foreign investment and private production, yet with strong government control and as long as these entities do not meddle in official affairs. Nevertheless, Burkhart and de Soysa argues that this kind of investment has more effect on democracy than the other way around. So based on this it could maybe be plausible that even if the government has tightened the grip and it is possible to argue for a democratic backlash in Russia, the fact that they left this small part of economical liberalization be open, there is hope for a rise of democracy once again. So even if the cup could be said not to be half full, neither is it empty?

4.3.1 Democratization, institutions and a backlash

The starting point or basis for this part of the chapter will be the political system's organization in accordance to the constitution of 1993, which declares Russia as a democratic state with a republican form of government, based on law and with a divide between the executive, the legislative and judicial powers.

Democracies can be parliamentary systems, semi-presidencies or presidencies. According to the Russian constitution of 1993, the country has a republican form of semi-presidency (Fish 2005 p. 203). This implies that the executive power is independent of the legislative power. Consistent with the theory dealing with institutional problems and democratization, one would expect that in accordance with the Russian constitution the country has a strong parliament even though the president is the head of state. Moreover, one can expect that there is a electoral cycle based on free and fair elections in accordance to Dahl's definition of democracy, as well as the possibility for the mass population to organize themselves and use a civil society as a "mouthpiece" to promote their interests and expectations. Nevertheless, in the case of a lack of these features one would expect that the democratization process would stop and in the end signs of a backlash would occur.

4.3.2 From Yeltsin to Putin, changes in policy.

During the Yeltsin period in Russian history I would argue that the country had a development towards more competition and participation. This means that according to the definition used in this thesis there was in fact a process of democratization. Using the definition of democratization and the figure from Dahl I argue that the Russian regime was moving from a closed hegemony towards democracy. There were for example several parties which could run in the elections; in fact, there were 43 parties which competed in the parliament elections of 1995. During this period it was also possible to participate in organizations which dealt with issues related to environment, democracy and religion. Most importantly, perhaps, there was to some degree an independent media. All these changes can be seen as signs of the regime's movement towards both participation and liberalization (public contestation). In any case the non-democratic regime during the Soviet era was done with, and Russia now embarked upon a journey of democratization. Based on the data from Freedom House one can identify both an increase in participation and competition during this period.

Nevertheless, things changed rapidly. Note that Yeltsin during the elections in 1996 had open support from the biggest and most influential media and business elites. One could maybe think that during this governmental period the process of democratization was on its way towards a consolidated democracy. Moreover, this brings us to the fact that during the economic shock treatment huge amounts of Russia's natural resources fell in to private hands. Some of the economic aspects and how they influenced the democratization process in Russia has already been discussed. However, how they affected the political system and regime is an important part of this section as well.

The liberalization of the Russian markets gave room for some to maneuver and get their hands on not only natural resources like oil and gas, but also for example ownership of what had formerly been the state media. These people were a small group of people who often had high positions in the communist system during the transition from the old regime to the new. These people are today often referred to as oligarchs because they got huge economic resources which also gave them access to influence governmental politics. It is said that they had the President in their pocket after their support during the elections of 1996. This was

further connected to why the Yeltsin regime was seen as one of the most corrupt periods of the great country's history (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006).

For western observers Yeltsin's period was characterized by a great deal of ambivalence. He used mutually exclusive rhetoric and reforms at the same time. Rhetoric like: towards democracy, international integration, and a functioning market. At the same time he used anti-western rhetoric, arbitrary policies, as well as informal ties of power and corruption. Moreover, it is said that during this era regional governments got to rule almost self-determination, in a time where Russia maybe needed consolidation and a firm leadership to ensure the transition they embarked upon. Moreover, the way Yeltsin gave privileged roles to his nearest friends and allies instead of institutionalizing democratic traditions and procedures created a corrupt regime. And most importantly the oligarch's entry to the politics after the presidential elections in 1996 erased all separation between public and political society, as well as between the state and the economy, and gave the economically most powerful people a direct influence over public policy. (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006 p. 35-36).

Nevertheless, this was about to change when Putin became the president of Russia. He had a vision which included more governmental spending and state control as the major population lived in hardship. One of Putin's reforms was actually directed towards corruption and the oligarchs' influence on state policy. This was welcomed by many. However, even though the intentions may have been good, this also made way for Russia's democratic backlash as the regime became less open for political difference and opposition.

As Putin came to power in Russia he moved quickly to reduce governmental influence from institutions other than the presidency by applying a rhetoric against corruption. He altered the composition in the ministries, from one that was composed of the traditional elites, to a ministry composed of personnel from the security and military sector. He centralized power by implementing new laws under which the president from now on could handpick the regional governors. It is said that this was done not only ensured that the regional governments ruled in line with the policy from the highest authority, but also so that the president could have a say in the composition of the upper chamber in the state Duma, as half of the members are appointed by the regional governors. This was part of a policy or reform which was intended to make the government more efficient and to give it a vertical power structure, something that it lacked during the Yeltsin era. The changes in election laws were

said to be part of a reform that was to make the composition of the parliament more efficient and loyal to the presidency. (Freedom House: Country Report 2012, Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006).

Furthermore, this did not make the mass population react negatively as they came from a corrupt regime which made them live in hardship. Overall, Putin gained personal popularity as the standard of living increased for most of the Russian population. This was connected to the increased state control over economic sectors, and other sectors which were strategically important for the government. It is said that most of the improvements were driven by the boom in oil and gas prices which followed after the economic collapse in 1998. (Freedom House: Country Report 2012, Dragnes 2012). However, Putin became the face which for Russian was associated with stability and growth. Between 2002 and 2009 Russians' real wages increased with 141 percent (Dragnes 2012).

At the same time Putin tried to eradicate the governmental corruption and corrupt structures which developed under Yeltsin's regime. One of the first things Putin changed was the influence which the oligarchs had over governmental policy. This was, as he claimed, a part of the fight against corruption, and also a sign of increased governmental control. As mentioned earlier Yeltsin was said to be in the "back pockets" of the oligarchs, something that Putin never would be. He summoned the most powerful elites and told them that things would change. From now on the oligarchs would not have political influence. In exchange Putin would not investigate, and if found illegal prosecute, them and the ways they got their hands on their wealth during the controversial privatization during the 1990's. They would from now on be treated like any other economic entity, and were naturally expected to pay taxes and follow the laws like everyone else (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006).

As mentioned earlier, Putin introduced legislative changes in 2004 which most importantly made the appointment of governors a job for the president himself, not a job for the regional voters, Putin cited a need to unify the country in the face of terrorist violence, probably referring to the situation in Chechnya. The government also started to fight democracy promotion groups and those other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), especially those receiving foreign funding and which were not pro-Kremlin. Connected to these changes in policy the government removed a possible threat in 2005, when a court sentenced billionaire and energy oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, founder of the oil firm Yukos, to eight years in

prison for fraud and tax evasion. And at the same time a parallel tax case was started against the company Yukos which led to the transfer of most of its assets to the state-owned Rosneft. Khodorkovsky had antagonized and worked against the Kremlin by founding different groups from political opposition, and his prosecution has been interpreted as a signal to the others that it is not wise to mangle in official government affairs (Freedom House: Country report 2012)

Nevertheless, in 2008 the Putin era was over, one would think, as he was constitutionally barred from serving a third consecutive term as president. Putin handpicked his successor, prime minister Dmitry Medvedev, who won the presidential elections with about 70 percent of the total votes. Nevertheless, Medvedev appointed Putin as his prime minister and had a dominant role in the Russian government even after he stepped down from presidency.

Moreover, as Medvedev stepped up as president he spoke of liberal ideas and values, yet little was changed in any significant ways in the political system which he inherited from Putin. Even though Medvedev spoke of more democracy and liberal values the political stagnation continued and the ongoing violence against the regimes most serious critics continued. (Dyrnes 2011, Dyrnes 2012, NTB 2011).

In 2008 the political leadership in Russia changed the constitution for the first time since 1993. They now extended the future presidential terms from the normal four to six year periods. And as Putin stayed in politics several people saw this as a sign that he would run for president in the election of 2012. However, it was also discussed if Medvedev would sit for two periods as president before Putin took back the presidency. Nonetheless, this did not happen. Medvedev stepped down after serving as president over one period, and Putin is now once again President of Russia. Now how this has affected the Russian democracy towards lesser competition and participation and it therefore could be said that the country had a democratic backlash I will try to explain in the next paragraphs, in using the institutional theory.

4.3.3 Government, Parliament and the President.

In Russia the president has a rather strong position. Formally, he is the head of state and controls the political guidelines for domestic and foreign policies. This gives the president direct influence on the overall government which is supposed to execute the daily management of the country. At the same time the head of state also nominates the prime minister and can lead meetings of the government. The president also directly controls the ministers of defense, foreign and domestic policy, minister of justice, and the intelligence service. The head of each department answers to the president. (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006)

The president also has great influence on the legislative power; he can promote new laws, and lay down veto to other laws. Each new law needs to be signed by the president. Yet, what according to Fish makes the Russian system semi-presidential is the fact that the Duma has the right to reject the president's nominee for prime minister. Nevertheless, the position of the Duma is paradoxically rather weak when it comes to this right, as the president can dissolve the parliament if it rejects his nominee for the third time. This can maybe explain why the Duma has never rejected the president's choice for prime minister in Russia (Fish 2005).

Moreover, in Russia the parliament is rather weak in comparison with the president in other areas as well. It has for example no actual power over the appointment of ministers; it is only there to approve the government which the president appoints. Its main function is to make laws, and in this respect it could be argued to be an important institution. Yet it is claimed that even if it is an important institution in the constitution, or by name, in practice it does not have a real say in the political agenda (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006). At least as long as the parliamentary elections are full of coercion and fraud (Fish 2005, Freedom House Country Report 2012). It could possibly become an important democratic institution, as it can overrun the President's veto when it comes to laws, passing them with a vote of qualified majority of two thirds. Yet as long as elections are rigged, the parliament stays an marginal institution, in some ways just as the old Soviets (councils) were, which did not have a say in governmental decisions.

Nevertheless, it has not always been like this. In Yeltsin's period as president the parliament was much more divided and Yeltsin could not always be sure of support from the parliament. And over two thirds of the legislative proposals were passed after being rejected by either the

president or the Federation Council during 1996-1999. However, such things have not happened during Putin's rule as he had great influence on the Duma (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006). Without mentioning electoral irregularities, this influence is based on the fact that in 2004 President Putin changes the way governors of the different regions of Russia got their positions. From the constitution of 1993 governors were chosen by the people in their respected regions. However, now they are directly appointed by the president to ensure that the regions are run according to the overall state's policy (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006).

The Russian parliament consists of two chambers; an upper house and a lower house. The upper house is called the Federation Council and has 166 seats. Half of the seats in the upper house are appointed by the regional governors, the other half by regional legislatures with a strong federal control. The other part of the Russian parliament is called the Duma. It consists of 450 representatives from the 83 regions in Russia. These seats are elected according to proportional representation on the basis of party-lists. All citizens over the age of 21 can be elected into the Duma. However, for parties to get representation in the Duma they need to gain a minimum of 7 percent of the overall votes in the country, this threshold has been risen from 5 during the 1990's. Also the new laws that deal with elections say that parties that want to run in the elections need to have 40 000 members and organizations in half of the federation's 83 administrative regions. The number was reduced from 50000 in 2010. (Freedom House country report 2012)

It has to be mentioned that this reduction from 40- to 50 000 members could be seen as restrictions being lifted. Moreover, it is easier to compete and participate in the Russian system today. Yet, there are so many irregularities and difficulties with the political system in Russia that this is maybe the only sign pointing in the direction towards more democracy. A part from this the minimum percentage needed to get seats in the Duma is today seven percent, which makes it difficult for smaller parties to compete and participate in the political environment. Just to illustrate this with a Norwegian example, if the Norwegian system had the same minimum during the parliament elections of 2009 only three parties would get enough votes to get seats in the national parliament. With a 5 percent minimum the Norwegian parliament has 6 parties in parliament based on normal mandates (NRK).

Moreover, at the end of 2008 the constitution was changed. It now extended the presidential period from four to six years, which opened for Putin, who won the presidential elections in 2012, to rule as president until 2024 as he and Medvedev change positions in government (Freedom House Country report 2012). In this respect the Russian system also stands out in comparison with other presidential and semi-presidential systems. As most systems have a two period limit as president no matter if you step down for a while. Not only can this be seen as an exploitation of the system, it most definitely restricts the public's possibility to have a say in governmental policy when the electoral cycle is extended.

Nevertheless, having a system with a strong president is not necessarily seen as a problem in the scholarly literature. However, when the constitution, which is supposed to set the rules of how laws and power works, in practice, is set aside, it can become a democratic problem. In Russia it has taken form as what one can maybe call super-presidentialism (Fish 2005). This means that most of the governmental power is centralized around the presidency which marginalizes and sets aside the other democratic institutions.

Moreover, another problem with having such a super-presidential system is the fact that democracy and its legitimacy are connected to the president and his or hers individual performance. This is how open politics and markets are connected to the Yeltsin era and chaos. While Putin's rule is viewed as another form or approach of democracy, a Russian one (Fish 2005).

Furthermore, the parliament becomes an almost unimportant institution in this kind of a system, which can undermine the legitimacy of democracy and the rule of the people as their representatives in fact are there just to approve of decisions that have already been made at the top level of government. And when one as a scholar, or an inhabitant in the respective country, connects this system to and compares it with the old one; it may seem to be surprisingly similar.

The point is that power sharing between the institutions is a sign of both competition and participation, and when the parliament is reduced to nearly nothing it becomes a democratic problem. One of Dahl's seven criteria in his definition of democracy is that the elected officials are supposed to have a certain degree of control over government decisions about

policy, and to this do be possible the system needs to have some kind of separation of power. Now this power is vested in the officials constitutionally, however, the problems do maybe become more clear when one is presented with facts dealing with the way elections are conducted in Russia.

4.3.4 A backlash in political and civil liberties

Before the presidential election in March 2012 there was also an election to the state Duma in December 2011. It was important for the Kremlin that the president still had a majority in the national parliament before the presidential elections. The government managed to hold on to this majority, which was important so that the parliament still was supportive of the president, and thus a marginal agent. However, there were major demonstrations after both elections. It was claimed that the regime used large scale electoral fraud to secure victory in both. What is striking is that it was maybe not the result people took to the streets to demonstrate against, it was the way the regime kept the opposition away from the elections and limited their possibility to run for both seats in the Duma and for the presidency. After the Duma elections over 30.000 accusations of electoral fraud have been presented, yet no one has ever been held responsible for this. Moreover, as Putin and the powers at the Kremlin have control over the overall media, they have hammered in one major message to the public: "Putin or chaos". So in addition to keeping the opposition away by limiting their access to the elections, the system also keeps the opposition out of the media. In addition, the opposition is portrayed as chaos in comparison to Putin, which by many appears to be credible based on the late 1990's and the changes that followed. This is because of the superpresidential form of governing, which connects democracy's legitimacy to the person in charge at the time, not the system in itself. (Dragnes 2012, Rodum and Johannessen 2012, Steinar Dyrnes 2012, NTB 2012)

Based on the way elections are conducted political and civil liberties are claimed to be rather weak in today's Russia. It is claimed that all of the elections in Russia, from the 2000 presidential to the Duma in 2007, were carefully engineered by the administration. In the state Duma election of 2003 the Kremlin controlled United Russia captured 306 out of 450 seats. Backed by the national media and most of the printed newspapers no opponent was able to challenge Putin in the presidential election of 2004. He received 71 percent of the total votes , while his nearest rival got under 14 percent. Moreover, as already mentioned Putin changed the procedure of how the governors were appointed in Russia the same year, as well as started

a policy which made it harder for democracy-promoting groups and other NOG's which received foreign founding.

In 2007 the election was fixed so that the pro-Kremlin parties would get a majority in the lower house. United Russia got 315 of the seats in the Duma, so the parliament kept being an institution which approved of policy already made at the top. Furthermore, in the presidential election of 2008 state dominance of media made it possible for Vladimir Putin to pass his presidential mandate to his handpicked successor Dmitry Medvedev even more easily than Yeltsin did when he picked Putin. The two are said to have swapped positions to avoid violating the ban on serving as president for more than two consecutive periods.

Heavy manipulation of the elections to the state Duma in December 2011 barely preserved the presidential party's majority in the lower house of the parliament. United Russia only captured 238 seats, but the party still has majority in the lower house as well as in the upper house. However, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reported major irregularities during the election. These included media bias and interference by state authorities, which ended with tens of thousands of anti-government demonstrators taking to the streets to protest against the electoral fraud which was displayed by the Medvedev- Putin government. And the same kind of pre-decided election in the parliament took place in the presidential election of March 2012, where Putin and Medvedev exchanged positions in government again (Freedom House Country report 2012, Fish 2005).

Nevertheless, in the political society which was left behind after the 1990's there was need for gathering the political elites both national and regional in a common direction. As the system was corrupt and people misused their positions to get more power, it is possible to understand why there was need for a strong central government. However, if the government manipulates elections, both for president and parliament, democracy is weakened. Electoral fraud aimed at getting a parliament that supports the president moves the system away from competition and participation, towards less. In this respect the Duma loses its function.

Now, why is the parliament important when one has a powerful president? Well, as Fish claims, the most important aspect for countries in which find themselves within a process of democratization, which I argue Russia was during the early 1990s, is that countries with

strong parliaments have done better than the ones with weak parliaments. When confronted with this theory and the data which I have found it is maybe not unlikely that this applies to the case of democratization and a backlash in Russia.

Moreover, just as the parliament is supposed to balance the power of a president, a civil society is meant to balance a government. This is why it has been seen as important to have a system based on political openness where it is possible for people to organize themselves in interest groups, political or other organizations so that civil society can balance the political society, and prohibit it to become a dictatorship. According to the data, in the case of Russia the new regime has done exactly the opposite. Putin has restricted the possibility for people to stand up against the regime if they in fact do not support the regime and power holders. Note that I do not claim that Putin is a dictator, as dictators have a tendency to prohibit the existence of a opposition, which leaves them with a support of almost a hundred percent at elections. Yet, again it is possible to argue that there is a bit of ambivalence when studying data from the election, as the situation in Chechnya is different. A region dominated by conflict, yet giving all political support to the political enemy in elections. (Freedom House: Country Report 2012, Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006). What I am trying to get to is that when I consider this data in light of the broader definition of democracy, it becomes problematic. It does not look like people's choice necessarily is elected, and weighed equally in government, or that the elected officials in parliament have much to say in government decisions about policy.

Furthermore, even if the constitution laid the groundwork for freedom of speech, the government controls most of the media in Russia, especially all the television networks. Also, journalists who are critical towards the power in Kremlin have been victims of brutal attacks, and in some cases killed, without any of the people claimed to be the masterminds being prosecuted. It could be understood as dangerous for critical journalists to stay in Russia. Moreover, laws on extremism have made it possible to stop speeches, organizations and activities which do not have official support, making it difficult for people to organize and gather in political activities like demonstrations. In cases like these the police are often used to stop demonstrations and arrest participants. The same goes for religious gatherings. And I think it undermines the fifth point from Dahl's definition of democracy, which says that a democratic regime shall guarantee citizens to be able to express themselves without fear even

if critical towards the government. (Freedom House Country report 2012, Fish 2005, NTB 2012) It has to be mentioned that the Internet is used as an example of the opposite, it is free and open to all, yet how much of a power factor it can be opposed to the national media coverage I would question nonetheless.

When it comes to religious freedom in today's Russia, the constitution also in this area respects it; however how it actually is implemented is another question. The Christian Orthodox Church has a special place in Russia, especially after 2009, when the President authorized laws to religious instructions in public school. So where other European and western societies separates the state and the church, Russia is bringing them closer together. And therefore I argue that after 2009 that there has been movement towards lesser access to alternative information and associational autonomy in Russia. (Freedom House: Country report 2012).

Moreover, as democratization is a trait based on a increase in competition and participation I would argue that one can identify a significant decrease in these aspects after Putin became president, based on the centralizing of power and electoral fraud. It can possibly be traced back to the period of economical transition. And even if one can claim that today's system is more open than in the Soviet era it has become less open than during the beginning of Yeltsin's period as president and the government has undermined both other institutions and the political- and the civil society. Now some may argue that this centralization was needed, as the political system was in chaos. However, as political and civil liberties have been restricted by this, I would rather argue that this has resulted in a movement away from competition and participation from the early Yeltsin period till today, and therefore it has been a democratic backlash in Russia.

When it comes to the elections in Russia the data I have presented paints a dark picture of the democratic system. Not only does this show the use of electoral fraud but it is also connected to the composition of the parliament. As Fish claims (see the theory chapter) countries with strong parliaments have done better in a process of democratization than those with a weak parliament. And this also has to do with the legitimacy which is connected to the fact that parliaments often reflect the will and composition of the people. When it comes to the Russian case these aspects of the Russian society have become weaker these last years.

As the Russian constitution according to Fish makes way for a semi presidency in Russia, the changes made by Putin have in fact created a super-presidency, which centralized the power, and as I argue undermines the possibility for a political opposition something that is an important prerequisite of democracy. Nevertheless, to a certain degree the backlash in the democratic process could possibly be identified as already beginning when the oligarchs got a strong position in governmental policy during the Yeltsin era. I would argue that the oligarch's entry in to the political realm undermined the elected officials, and therefore can be considered as a sign of democratic recession, and if one agrees with this it could be argued that the process of democratization was shorter than scholars believed.

In the end, one can probably end up questioning whether or not the Russian democracy in fact respects several of the features which are important in Dahl's definition of democracy. To me it looks like there is little respect for the constitution which lays the groundwork for elected officials to have a certain degree of control over government decisions. This is connected to the major electoral fraud which has been documented during several of the past elections in Russia. This of course also undermines Dahl's criteria for free and fair elections, and the laws on elections are in fact instruments for keeping a possible opposition at bay.

Moreover, with focus when one considers the part of the theory dealing with democratization and institutional problems, it becomes clear that in Russia there are problems with several of these "markers". This makes it possible to understand why some scholars talk about a Russian Backlash, which has created what seems as a similar system to the old Soviet one.

To sum this all up and connect it to the expectations mentioned in the early part of this topic (see paragraph 4.3.1), there are several markers which point in the direction of, and that explains why, scholars talk about backlash . First of all, what was mentioned was that a strong parliament is meant to secure the democratic transition. This is to balance the president as well as create a legitimate reflection of the population and their interests. What is more a democracy has an electoral cycle which ensures that the mass population can change people in government regularly. To a certain degree these elements of democracy seems to have been in place and developing towards more openness during the early 1990s. Yet the new laws on NGO's, governors, parliament, and elections, and electoral fraud have undermined this shift and reversed the movement. As well as the new electoral cycles have made longer intervals between the elections, which means that the wishes and needs of the people take longer to

reach the government. Moreover, there is shown a decrease in the civil society's possibility to organize and promote their interests after Putin came to power. All these democratic markers can explain why several scholars and organizations like Freedom House talk about a democratic backlash in Russia.

4.4.1 The culture as a cause for the Russian backlash

I have now tried to explain the backlash through the lens of economical development and the lens of institutional problems. Yet some scholars try to explain the movement towards lesser democracy, hence a democratic backlash, based on a country's political culture. This is what I will try to do in this section, to look at the political culture and try to explain the Russian backlash in light of it.

I find it plausible that the Russian regime had signs of attitudinal change and constitutional change, however was set back by the fact that a group of people spent significant resources attempting to reach their own personal objectives without going through the canal of political society. Linz & Stepan see this as the only legitimate place to compete for control and regulations.

If one looks at the Russian westwards policy in the early 1990s through the lens of political culture, it could be claimed that the old norms and beliefs were kept in place by not establishing a democratic culture nationwide. To a certain degree it could probably be claimed that this movement westwards was done through a top-down approach which in itself, as one of Inglehart point's, and Welzel, made the democratic transition fragile because of the lack of a focus on the mass population and their culture. Like what I choose to call hermeneutic process, which include a top-down as well as a bottom- up approach, did not occur. Moreover, the point is that it could be claimed that the respect for democratic values at best were beginning to take hold in the urban areas of Russia.

The period where Yeltsin's regime was connected to the oligarchs and corruption at the top level of government, could maybe be seen as the most important signs of the beginning of the democratic backlash. From democratization towards Dahl's polyarchy (from figure 2), towards what Dahl calls a competitive oligarchy. And as I have written earlier in this thesis

the ultimate goal has to be reaching democracy (polyarchy). And therefore reversed the attitudinal and constitutional changes in Russia.

Furthermore, the economic crisis which ended in the collapse of the Ruble can be identified as giving way for survival values in Russia. This means that the population as well as the government prioritized economical growth and or military security, and gave less priority to democratic values. Democratic values became subordinate and made it possible for a charismatic leader, like Putin and the way he is portrayed by state media, to strengthen or move towards greater control. This is maybe not a surprise as people lacked basic products and maybe had harder conditions than during the Soviet era. So, the democratic values came second. If one agrees that a democratic culture did not get a foothold in Russia the crisis could have brought with it an authoritarian nostalgia. This can be seen as preventing the development of a democratic culture in this enormous country, which Russia is, and gave way for a charismatic leader to tighten the grip around the governmental powers. In the case of Russia this meant that the authoritarian nostalgia along with survival values enabled Putin to seize control and suppress any opposition by taking control over all governmental resources, in the name of fighting corruption.

Russia is not the only example of countries in such a transition. As an empirical example for these kind of cases where countries were on the verge of a democratic backlash Huntington uses several cases from Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Pakistan and to the Philippines. These were countries in which disappointment over the democratic transition became widespread. When the different military regimes were thrown from their positions, new hope rose. However, democracy did not in itself produce solutions for the economic and the social problems in these cases. In the end, the response to democracy in these cases was often a form of an "authoritarian nostalgia" and the question from the outside world was: would the new regimes consolidate or collapse? (Huntington 1991).

The answer to Huntington's question, is that this is based on two criteria: first, to what extent the political elites, and the public, believe that the rulers should be chosen by democratic means, and that this would test the democratic (political) culture in the countries. Second, to what extent do the elites and the public in fact choose their leaders through elections, which he calls a "*behavioral test of the institutionalization of democratic practices in the politics of the country*" (Huntington 1991 p. 259). It is basically the same as what is presented by

Inglehart and Welzel when it comes to owning a democratic culture both on a top level and at the bottom level of society.

This issue of developing a democratic culture brings into focus the relationship between the effectiveness of a new democratic government and its legitimacy, because a non-democratic regime and its culture is based on its efficiency. This means the regime's performance in face of problems and how they solve these problems. There is no question of if they have any popular legitimacy to do whatever they choose to, but what they deliver. When or if non-democratic regimes are not able to deliver, it could be possible to predict that unrest might occur. A new democratic regime is not necessarily judged by what they deliver in face of economic and security challenges, but rather by how they respond to their inability to solve the problems which arise at a given time. As mentioned earlier it is assumed that socioeconomic challenges can undermine democratic regimes. However, as Huntington explains, democratic regimes did survive the Great Depression in the 1930s. *"They survived because, in the words of Ekkart Zimmerman, of the ability of group leaders to come together, form new coalitions, sometimes on the basis of reaffirming older ones (such as Belgium), and then settle on how to steer the economy"* (Huntington 1991 p. 259).

Huntington goes further to claim that the stability of democratic regimes depends first and foremost on the ability of the political elites, party leaders, military leaders and business leaders to come together to work out a plan for facing and coping with harsh challenges. And it is when a culture like this is not present, one can expect to observe a democratic backlash based on what Linz and Stepan calls behavioral, constitutional and attitudinal changes.

Distinguishing between support for democracy and support for the government that democratic election produce are, especially for new democracies, important to remember in a democratic transition. I choose to use the same example of governmental dissatisfaction in Spain as Huntington did to reflect on the question of support for democracy, and to explain what is meant in the section above dealing with governmental effectiveness and legitimacy in relation to political culture:

"In the last years of the Franco regime unemployment was among the lowest in Europe (average about 3 percent), and the economic growth rate was one of the highest in the world (average about 7 percent). In the first years of democracy in the late 1970s and early 1980s, unemployment rose to 20 percent and economic growth dropped to less than 2 percent. Confidence in the ability of democracy to resolve these problems varied widely.....In 1978, 77 percent of the Spanish public believed that

democracy was the best political system for Spain. That figure dipped to 69 percent in 1980, but rose to 81 percent in 1981, and 85 percent in 1983" (Huntington 1991. p 261-262)

The point of showing these numbers is to show that in a democracy it is not only efficiency that creates legitimacy, but also the electoral cycle. With the increasing economic hardship in Spain, the public lost faith in the Suarez government, and elected Felipe Gonzalez and the socialists in to office, which resulted in the renewed confidence in that the government could solve Spain's problems (Huntington 1991).

Furthermore, without a democratic culture, or rather another political culture, an authoritarian "nostalgia" could create a democratic setback. However in the case of Spain, a backlash did not happen because it was believed by both the public and in the political society were that democracy still was the best from for government. This could be explained by the notion of a democratic culture. Democracy does not mean that problems will be resolved by the regime itself, but rather we connect democracy and a democratic culture to the values of being able to remove and elect new rulers, which can be claimed to be the essence of democratic behavior. This means that new democracies can become consolidated only when the public and the elites believe and understand that democracy is the solution to the problem of tyranny, however not necessarily to economic or social challenges (Huntington 1991).

Moreover, this is what the difference between a formal and a genuine democracy: *"Elite integrity makes the difference between formal democracy and effective democracy- between democracy in name only, where elections are held and where civil and political liberties exist on paper but the governing elites feel free to ignore people's rights and govern on their own behalf; and democracy that is genuinely responsive to mass preferences and respects people's civil and political liberties. (Inglehart and Welzel 2005 p. 299)*

Furthermore, in the case of Russia the opposite happened, and political culture, survival values and authoritarian nostalgia could be said to help explain why. It seems that Russians connect democracy and liberal values to Yeltsin's personal traits and to his period as president, and therefore that a democracy like Dahl's means chaos. It is at least this way it is presented by the state owned media today. Putin's fight with the oligarchs and the centralization of power around the presidency can be understood as in fact necessary to get rid of the corrupt system in Russia where the line between business and politics was removed during the 1990s. However, this corrupt system which almost bankrupted Russia and lead to the collapse of the ruble also made it possible for Putin to seize control thanks to the

authoritarian nostalgia in the country. Moreover, this is understandable as the public along with the political leadership in Russia were dominated by survival values because of the economic situation, and the political culture in Russia longed for a strong leader reminiscent of the old times.

However, one of Linz' and Stepan's major points about the Russian case is that a democratic culture outside of the sphere of the urban political elite was never built. So the rest of Russia still had the 75 years of the Soviet values, norms and traditions in their mind (Linz & Stepan 1996 p. 376). There has in fact never existed a democratic tradition in Russia, at least not in the Western or broader sense. (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006 p. 15) One could maybe see the Soviet system as the first system where Russia tried to listen to the people at the grassroots level and bringing them and their interests up to the top.

As I see it, if Russia had a democratic culture the transition after Yeltsin and during Putin may not have been carried out by removing or restricting the civil and political liberties. These restrictions which today have been the some of the major reasons for demoting the Russian system from "Partly free" to "Not Free" by the Freedom House Index, and the reasons why scholars talk about a democratic backlash in Russia.

5.1.1 Movement from democracy in Russia towards just a “sham”?

Before moving on to answering the last question of this thesis it could be interesting to have a short part about how the Russian system fits in to Dahl's definition of democracy. According to Dahl, in order to be defined as a liberal democracy a regime needs to ensure the seven points which deals with competition, participation and civil and political liberties. Other authors like Inglehart and Welzel claim that regimes that have these guarantees only in constitution , not in practice are, in fact what they call fake democracies. It could also be understood that marginalization of one of the concepts: participation, competition or political- and civil liberties, which liberal democracies ensure, based on cultural or historical reasons is not accepted as legitimate. So, how does the Russian regime fit in to the definition of a liberal democracy?

First, the Russian constitution of 1993 says that Russia is a democratic and republican regime. One of the conditions of democracy listed by Dahl is; inclusive suffrage, and in Russia there is an almost universal right to vote. Actually, people can run for elected office at the early age of 21 years old. There are also relatively frequent conducted elections; the Duma for example

earlier sat for a period of four years, and now it sits for a period of five. The president now sits for a period of six years between elections. In these respects, the Russian regime fits the Dahl's requirements of democracy, yet this is also where I would argue that it stops fitting his conditions. Moreover, this I argue because we can question whether the elections are free and fair, and if the parliament really is an institution with influence over the executive power.

According to the first point listed by Dahl, the power needs to lie in the hands of the elected officials. Looking at Russia there are several things that need to be said about this matter. Firstly, the President is elected and can be said to represent the overarching political majority. However, the Duma is marginalized. Furthermore, during the first years after 1993 the regional governors were in fact elected by the people in the different regions. But when the laws were changed, and governors started to be appointed by the president resulting in more centralized power, the Russian democracy was weakened further. Nevertheless, a strong presidency is not a contradiction of liberal democracies. The problem of the Russian regime is that there are very weak checks and balances in place for the other powers to control the presidential power, which I understand the constitution of 1993 laid the ground-works for.

Furthermore, the new election laws have created a party system which is favorable to big parties. As has earlier been mentioned, it has become difficult for smaller parties to get representation because they need to get at least 7 percent of the total votes. This also creates problems for smaller parties, especially those who represent a certain region. However, even if these laws were to be changed, it could prove to be difficult to become a real opposition to the government in power. One of the many reasons could be the fact that the government has a tight control over the overall media. This means that for example articles that are critical towards the sitting government might not be published. And as mentioned earlier the governmental control over the overall media stations in Russia made it possible for Putin to handpick his successor. Moreover, the way Putin and Medvedev just swapped positions in the presidential election of 2012 could be seen as a confirmation of Russia's political deficit when it comes to competition and fairness of elections. This can lead us to see that the Russian regime does not fit Dahl's criteria for free and fair elections, and in light of the fact that the state controls the media, this also limits the right to alternative information.

So, the fairness and the competition in election are questionable in the Russian democracy. True, they have elections and several parties. However, as presented by Freedom House,

several elections have been rigged to secure a majority in the lower house which supports the president. As already mentioned relation to the media, when it comes to the freedom of speech freedom and of assembly, much can be said. I might not even get to touch everything on the surface, but some important things might be said about the so called Russian democracy. Firstly, in a liberal democracy the institutions of a government need to guarantee the citizen's rights to express themselves, and their opinions without fear. Secondly, a liberal democracy values people's freedom of choice, meaning that it values that people have access to information in general like the Internet or different media, but also that they have access to other religious writings or philosophies of life which may go against what the government believes in, this including political perspectives. Moreover, people should have the opportunity to organize themselves even if they value other ideas than the government does. And according to Freedom House, Fish and others, Russia lacks especially this. In other words, when we compare the Russian political regime to Dahl's standards it does not fit in to a description of a liberal democracy. To some extent it can even be questioned if it fits a narrow definition if both the parliamentary elections and especially the presidential elections are already decided, because of electoral fraud. Moreover, scholars like Inglehart and Welzel might because of these aspects which I have highlighted call Russia a "sham" democracy.

6.1.1 An holistic view of the democratic backlash in Russia.

Up to this point I have presented the different explanatory approaches as isolated theories. What I will try now is to answer the last question of this thesis: how the explanations together can contribute to our understanding of the case.

What I have come to so far is that the three approaches all highlight important aspects of what is needed to complete a process of democratization and reach a consolidated democracy. The lack of these features could possibly be an explanation when it comes to why a country such as Russia has experienced a democratic backlash. With this I mean that they have gone from an increase in competition and participation based on political rights and civil liberties, to a decrease.

Nevertheless, as I see it, based on the theories which have been presented in this thesis one theory alone is not enough to explain and understand the democratic recession Russia has experienced. I argue that the theories are relying, in greater or lesser degree, to touch upon the same aspects as the other approaches, and thus using all these theories to create a more

holistic or hermeneutic view and understanding is needed. The human world and the world of democracy are so complex that one integrated model could be better than three supposedly mutually exclusive theories, and thus, I will try to show that they are rather complement each other than exclude one another.

6.1.2 Economical development, institutions and power and political culture

It is said that democratization happens when a non-democratic regime undertakes a transition towards a more democratic system. In Russia the liberalization during the beginning of the Yeltsin era was such a transition like this. A transition from the old communist regime towards a more western liberal one.

The system became more open for competition and participation. The parliament was not the president's puppet, and the regions in Russia could elect their preferred governors. During this period of time the different regions in Russia could rule themselves with greater autonomy than ever before. To some degree I would argue that the Russian government started out with a liberal project towards a consolidated democracy, and their tool was form of shock-therapy.

At first the Russian regime had a behaviorally transition where most of the significant national actors tried to use democratic institutions like elections and the parliament to promote their interests. The problem is that the mass population of Russia was not part of this attitudinal change, it was rather top-down. What I mean is that the reforms were imposed on the mass population from the top level of Russian society, it was not a decision which everyone stood behind. This was something that made authoritarian nostalgia spread when the economic reforms made the standard of living worse. Moreover, when Yeltsin turned away from this shock-therapy, the liberal project, he also turned his back to the constitutional ways of governing. The people of Russia were subjected to the national laws differently, depending on political and economical resources. This also made the line between public and private life blurry, as the oligarchs had power over public policies. Corruption became widespread throughout all levels of society.

Furthermore, when Putin came to power I have argued that there had already been a turn towards less democracy because of the oligarch's entry in to the political sphere. Putin's reforms where synonymous with the centralizing of power and there were good reasons for that. He inherited a chaotic system full of corruption. Nevertheless, this did not turn the

system back on a democratic "track". Rather, it gave the system a push in the wrong direction, and made the backlash even bigger, as electoral fraud restricted the opposition's possibility to meddle in official policy and politics.

To isolate my case and only use one of the explanations for the Russian backlash could in fact make it difficult to understand why it happened. Moreover, it can create a picture which indicates an easy explanation and therefore also an easy fix. However, when having a more holistic view of the Russian case it becomes clear, that just like I understand Robert Cox about the world of social research and interaction, democracy is so complex that having only one point of view, one is not able to see the bigger picture. To illustrate this I would like to go through all three approaches as connected to one another.

Let me start with the highlights of the economic development. There was little allocation of the resources from the old power structure after the shock therapy. Even if the resources were allocated to the people now often know as the oligarchs, most of them had high government positions in the Soviet regime. As shown by the data, around two thirds of the major enterprises were sold to the managers who sat at the top of the respective enterprise. Furthermore, when these economically powerful people stepped into politics the divide between the political and private sphere was changed. This I would argue weakened the Russian democracy as the elected officials became marginalized contra the economical actors.

However, this changed when Putin came to power. He centralized the government and removed the oligarchs from politics. Paradoxically, this made it harder for a strong and independent middle class to rise as government control became even tighter. When it comes to the small business startup, the ambivalence of the reforms between the Yeltsin era and Putin era made it harder for people to succeed since bribes became a normal way of doing business in Yeltsin's period as president. So a strong civil society did not rise like expected by the shock-therapists.

So, what the theory of economical development and backlashes in a process of democratization can explain the following: When resources are not allocated and remain in governmental control it becomes impossible for a independent middle class to arise because the middle class, and the mass population, stays dependent on the government as they distribute the economic resources. And the government can stop and "squeeze" anyone who would want to stand up against it. Moreover, as there is no power outside of the political

center of power, it becomes possible for some to undermine competition and participation, and therefore weaken the democracy.

As the economical aspect can highlight how resource allocation can affect the creation of an independent middle class, I would argue that it therefore also affects both the mass population and the middle class' possibility to participate and compete in the political society.

Burkart and de Soysa claims that opening up the economy has a stronger effect on democratization rather than the other way around. Is it possible to identify that such an effect happen during the Yeltsin era? To some degree it might be possible to identify some arguments for this claim. As regional governments had more to say in their respective region after the liberalization project started, and as the power structure between the central government and the regional ones were more horizontal rather than vertical, like it is today. However, I would argue that this was rather a political initiative than an economical effect in Russia. Yet, it was part of the idea for greater liberalization which is a part of the economic theory.

Nevertheless, as I see it, the old structures from the Soviet era stayed intact as the managers of the enterprises got formal ownership over these. As a result an increasing and big industrialization and private production did not happen as predicted by the shock-therapists. Something that is said to should have made the society more complex and diverse. Diversity and complexity are two features which are supposed to make it harder for an authoritarian control. I will try not to take a stand about whether Russia is authoritarian per se, however I base my thesis on the demotion by Freedom House, from "partly free" to "not free". Nevertheless, what I at least can say is that the economical growth in Russia happened after the end of the Yeltsin era, and that the only independent power outside of the political elites were the oligarchs, which now are marginalized and the Russian system is left with a regime based on full central control.

Yet, one of the aspects of a successful democratization which is mentioned in the theory is that basic survival needs have to be in place before people can have a change in attitude. So the economical recession which one can observe after the end of the Soviet regime made it impossible for liberal values to get a foothold in the Russian society. However, we can question whether Russia would have been more democratic if the liberal project was kept going when oil and gas prices went "through the roof", after Putin became president.

What is sure is that even if the liberalization was set in motion in Russia, one of the most important aspects of economical theory can be questioned if came to be, a liberal market based on a consumer model. I would argue that the way the allocation was done to the oligarchs did keep the producers in control, rather than transferring economical power to consumers. To be able to do this, one of course needs a consumer base which often are represented by the middle class. However, the economical capitalism did not get a fundament in Russia. During the Yeltsin era, the oligarchs demanded to be heard, which undermined the elected officials. And during the Putin era, no one is heard as the middle class is kept almost marginal and the political society is kept at bay as there are reports of extensive electoral fraud. To me it looks as if the liberal changes in Russia ended up with being anticommunist rather than democratic, as Przeworski argued there was a risk of happening in the post communist transitions.

One of the many reasons I would use to explain the democratic backlash in Russia is based on state control. It is argued that an open economy lessens the state's control over its citizens, which in turn makes it possible for a political opposition to arise. As the Russian state still has the economical initiative, this opposition cannot become a force in their society, because it is dependent on funds for election campaigns. However as NGO's resource allocations are made almost impossible there is no way for Russians today to found an independent and critical opposition. "No middle class no democracy". So as Przeworski predicts the reforms and the democracy have been undermined, and the old power structure is maintained.

Nevertheless, even if the economical theory can to some degree explain a democratic backlash based on the lack of a "bourgeois" which could stand up against and check and balance the government, it cannot explain why the power relationship between the political institutions and the civil society is a democratic problem and how this results in a democratic backlash. Its strength is to show how a consumer economy creates a complex society which makes it possible for a middle class to become a important part of the political picture, and how the lack of this makes it possible for a government to return to undemocratic ways. Yet it can be put in to question whether the lack of resource allocation and a liberal economy can explain enough alone, as a middle class alone does not create democracy. It does not explain how the economy can affect culture and political institutions, or vice versa. This is why there is need for explanations focusing on other aspects as well.

As argued by the institutional theory, the parliament is an important political institution, and Fish claims countries in a democratic transition with strong parliaments have done better than those with weak ones. I have argued that the Russian parliament is weak as elections have been subject to long term fraud, to keep it loyal to the president. New laws have made it possible for the president to pick his governors who, in turn, picks officials for the upper house, something which was not possible under presidential control during the liberalization in the Yeltsin era. These aspects have undermined the legitimacy of the elected officials and are one of the reasons why scholars talk about a Russian backlash. As well as electoral fraud, the civil society in Russia has been kept at bay because of the new laws, which makes it possible for the government to crack down on organizations and protests critical towards the government. The freedom of speech can be said to have been restricted, something that is often connected to state control over the national media coverage. Furthermore, the Russian system does not guarantee the democratic aspects which are highlighted as important features if a political system is to be defined as a democracy today. These markers can show a systematic decrease in openness based on restrictions of participation and competition from the Yeltsin era throughout the Putin era.

Nevertheless, even if it can explain the backlash on the basis of all these democratic aspects, it does not create a clear picture of why the mass population have let it happen. This is easier to understand when one looks at Russia through the lens of economics and or political culture.

Based on what I have found, one of the most important aspects of the Russian backlash is that the economic collapse in Russia created survival values which placed the democratic values in the shadow of values like economic growth and military security. This made it possible for the government to undermine democracy and make the system less open. As a result, Russia has experienced a backlash or recession in democracy.

This was possible because the liberalization during the beginning of the Yeltsin era had a top-down approach, yet it therefore lacked focus on the internal ownership of democracy by the rest of the population. As the economic crisis hit Russia the system relapsed because of what has been called authoritarian nostalgia. The lack of a democratic culture in Russia can be said to have triggered an authoritarian nostalgia, which in turn caused the democratic backlash when they met harder times. Survival values were put first, and democratic ones came second.

In the end, what I have tried to present is that the process of democratization is a complex matter, and when there is a democratic backlash it is difficult to put a finger on exactly why. What has been most important for the Russian backlash is hard to point out. I would rather say that an integrated model can shed light on the bigger picture as one gets the impression that the different explanations to a certain degree are intertwined, and make more sense when considered together. This makes me think that multidisciplinary research is just as important, as such research can create a bigger picture than an analysis based only in economical, political or cultural explanations. As a particular theoretical perspective emphasizes a set of explanations and present what it regards as the most significant ones. And therefore focus less on other aspects. Another perspective would emphasize something else, in this thesis it takes the form of a cultural perspective, a economic one and a institutional one. Moreover, I therefore argue that when trying to get an overview or an overall understanding of a case of a democratic backlash, like the one in Russia, using multiple explanations does this better than just using one perspective. Yet it also has to be said that different perspectives will contribute to the overall understanding in different ways, not necessarily equally, yet a study like this could possibly be too big for a master thesis. Nevertheless, using all three theories presented in this thesis gives a understanding based on a big picture.

6.2.1 Conclusion

What I have tried to answer is: *When scholars around the world now talk about the Russian democratization process , they talk about a "Russian Backlash". - 1) What is meant by this? 2) What are the main explanations of the phenomenon? 3) And how do these explanations together contribute to our understanding of the Russian case?* I had a special focus on the last two as they are the most important questions.

First of all, I have tried to explain what is meant by democratization and backlashes, based on the fact that democratization is happening when a system is moving towards more participation and competition. These aspects have been covered by Robert A. Dahl's seven points of what constitutes as a democracy. When scholars talk about a democratic backlash, they mean a movement from more openness towards less. In other words a democratic backlash takes place when a process of democratization stops and moves backwards. When scholars talk about a "Russian Backlash" they mean that the Russian system has moved from a increase in competition and participation, based on political rights and civil liberties, to a decrease. This is why the Freedom House Index has demoted the Russian system from "Partly Free" to "Not Free".

Second, the thesis has presented three different approaches which try to explain this democratic backlash. These explanations are based on; economical development, institutional problems and political culture respectively.

The economical theory explains the democratic backlash in Russia by focusing on the lack of allocation of resources, which made it impossible for a strong and independent middle class to arise in Russia. This means that it could not become a part of the political arena and could not check and balance the government as the civil society still is dependent of governmental resources.

Moreover, the institutional theory explains the backlash based on electoral fraud which has lessened the parliament's power and has become a democratic problem. Furthermore, as new laws restricting both the possibility for an opposition, and at the same time as some laws have centralized power, the legitimacy of the Russian democracy has suffered. The weakened legitimacy of the parliament has been used to explain why scholars talk about a democratic recession, as the Duma had more power during the early 1990s. In addition, the governmental

control over the media coverage in Russia has been a subject to great deal of critique. As the media bias makes it possible for the Kremlin to control the picture presented to the overall population. All in all, there are signs of weakening significance of several aspects of Dahl's seven points of democracy. Especially when it comes to "Free and fair elections", "Freedom of expression", "Alternative information" and "associational autonomy".

The last approach explains the democratic backlash through the lens of political culture. Using this approach it becomes clear that the democratic culture in Russia was at best implemented with a top-down approach. But Scholars like Inglehar and Welzel claim that there is need for the mass population to adopt this culture at the same time. As the liberalization during the 90's was a product of a top political initiative, this could explain why Russia had a authoritarian nostalgia when the country had a economical crisis in the end of the same decade.

To me the democratic backlash or recession in Russia is a complex matter, and trying to understand it through just one explanation seems impossible. There are so many aspects which have contributed to the movement from an increase in participation and competition during the beginning of the Yeltsin era, to a decrease towards its end, and during President Putin's reign. I have tried to argue that the lack of a middle class has made it possible for the government to seize control over the resources which means that there has not been an allocation of resources to the private sector which is needed if the middle class is supposed to rise and become an important actor on the political arena.

Together with these explanations, the electoral fraud and the marginalization of the parliament has weakened the Russian democracy and created less openness. As well as the new laws made during the Putin and Medvedev era have tightened governmental power and control. Yet, this has been possible because of the political culture in Russia. As there was only a top-down democratization and liberalization during the first year of shock therapy. This made way for what is called an authoritarian nostalgia when the economic chaos ended with the collapse of the Ruble. This tightened control was then enabled by the dominance of survival values which made the democratic values come second, which arguably is strongly connected to the economical aspects of democratization.

The three theories give meaning by themselves, however I see them as intertwined rather than mutually exclusive. Together they create a more holistic understanding, this is why I have

used the term hermeneutics to explain what I mean. As one part lights up one aspect of the backlash, the other theory lets one understand another part of this complex case. And together all three contributes to a more holistic or integrated understanding of why scholars talk about a Russian backlash.

Based on this thesis it could possibly be claimed that a democracy as Dahl defines it, never came to be in Russia. There was an attempt to liberalize the economy to create a complex society, however this was stopped during the first year. Never giving the democratic institutions and values the chance to get a foothold both at the top level, and neither in the mass population. However ,there are signs that there was an increase of participation and competition during the start of the 1990's, yet ever since the middle of the decade a decrease.

To end this thesis I would like to quote the former Russian Prime minster (1992-1998) Viktor Chernomyrdin: "*We wanted the best, but it turned out as always*". (Steele 2010).

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