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From authoritarianism to authoritarianism. The ideological and constitutional origins of the modern Russian state.

Abstract

The subject of the work is legal and constitutional transformations occurring in modern Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The work consists of five chapters, presenting successive stages of shaping the political system of the modern Russian state in chronological order.

The first chapter discusses the constitutional origins of the modern Russian state. The analysis includes the process of emancipation of the RSFSR authorities and the conversion of this federal republic into an independent state. This process is presented in terms of the legal and constitutional dualism on the Russian territory, that existed until the dissolution of the Soviet Union and issues related to the acquisition of control over the structures of the Soviet state by the authorities of sovereign Russia. A large part of the chapter was devoted to the establishment of new institutions, especially the appointment of the office of the president of Russia and the new territorial structure of the country.

The second chapter is devoted to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, adopted in 1993. Due to the dominant position of the president, the chapter focuses was mainly on discussing his constitutional position and on the relationship between the head of state and other centers of power, especially the regional authorities.

Chapter three covers the period of the presidency of Boris Yeltsin from the entry into force of the constitution until the resignation of the president on December 31st, 1999. During that time in Russia, a failed attempt to build a liberal democracy was made. The conflict between the president and the communist opposition in the State Duma as well as unpopular economic reforms led to a serious weakening of the presidential power. The chapter outlines the course of the conflict and its consequences for the state. The most important was disperses of the power and the creation of informal structures centered around the former nomenclature, oligarchs and regional leaders.

Chapter four is devoted to the first Vladimir Putin's two presidential terms. This part of the work starts with a presentation of a strong power program announced by Putin after his election victory in 2000. The practical implementation of this program was the political reforms in Russia, discussed in detail based on the legislative acts from this period. The analysis of the reforms was carried out primarily in terms of the process of strengthening the power and re-centralizing of the state. The particular reforms: political, administrative, economic, military and security force structures were described in the following sections. The chapter covers also the process of taking over the control by the presidential camp over the resources and state institutions, that are essential to maintaining power.

Chapter five presents the power system built by Vladimir Putin after his return to the president's office in 2012. It discusses the successive stages of Russia's legal and political evolution, which has occurred in response to the deteriorating policy and economic situation. Important elements of this evolution were m.in. further changes to electoral legislation, including the restoration of direct elections of governors and the subsequent modification of the relationship between the central authority and the *regions*. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to the development of the mature Russian authoritarianism and the problem of respect for civil rights. Much attention has been paid to the process of progressive personalization of power and the increase in the importance of military and security structures. It also covers and analyses normative acts limiting freedom of expression including legislation introducing new stricter rules for use of the Internet in Russia. The chapter ends with the presentation of the sources and the main assumptions of the so-called conservative return – an ideology adopted by the power camp after Putin's return to the presidential office.

The work concludes with conclusions justifying the thesis of the authoritarian direction of legal and systemic evolution in Russia. It also presents the synthetic characteristics of the regime of the Russian Federation, which in its present form has all the most important features allowing it to be counted as contemporary type of authoritarianism, described in the literature as *competitive authoritarianism*.