Between Collaboration and Subordination.

State and Non-State Actors in Russian Anti-Drug Policy

Aadne Aasland, Sabine Kropp & Anastasia Y. Meylakhs

Abstract

Due to weak state and administrative capacity, the Russian government has involved resource-rich non-state actors into policymaking since about 2005 and established numerous institutionalized platforms, networks, and forums. These networks mainly emerge on regional and local levels and are designed to generate policy advice, implement decisions, and contribute to output legitimacy. A crucial question is how the authorities govern and regulate these bodies under the terms of a hybrid regime. The paper sheds light on why and how state authorities interact with non-state actors and unravels functions and flavors of governance networks in Russia. Drawing on the empirical results of case studies on anti-drug policy conducted in the regions Samara and St Petersburg, the paper reveals that state dominance within networks is a significant characteristic, although authorities rarely apply explicit 'hard' tools of government onto collaborations with non-state actors. The paper also allows for theorizing on the role of governance networks in a hybrid regime.

Keywords: Governance networks, Russia, drug policy, NGOs, New Public Management

Authors:

Aadne Aasland, Ph.D.
The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Oslo Metropolitan University, St. Olavs plass, 0130, Oslo, Norway, aadnea@oslomet.no

Prof. Dr. Sabine Kropp
Freie Universität Berlin, Otto-Suhr Institute of Political Science, Chair of German Politics, Ihnestr. 22, 14195 Berlin, Germany, sabine.kropp@fu-berlin.de
(address of correspondence)

Anastasia Y. Meylakhs
International Centre for Health Economics, Management, and Policy, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Kantemirovskaya St., 3 A, office 408, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, 194100, nastia.meylakhs@gmail.com

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Introduction: Collaboration between state and non-state actors in a hybrid regime – an oxymoron?

Contrary to past expectations, hybrid and 'new' authoritarian regimes have proved to be largely stable. Nothing currently suggests that their numbers will decrease or that they will join the camp of democratic regimes in the near future. A crucial observation in this respect is that, irrespective of the regime type, state and non-state actors collaborate in policymaking processes. Since these collaborations are often institutionalized and are given a steady and predictable structure, network-like interactions between various types of actors have emerged. Strikingly, hybrid and authoritarian regimes are emulating Western-style governance networks in order to increase their output legitimacy (Davies et al. 2016; Berg-Nordlie et al. 2018). Taking up this observation, this article looks at the relations between state and civil society through the lens of governance theory.

Russia represents a hybrid regime which has become increasingly authoritarian over the past decade (Gill 1015; Gel'man 2016; Treisman 2018). This development is also reflected in the relations between state and civil society. Since about 2005, however, restrictive policies against NGOs with foreign connections have been deliberately combined with multifarious attempts by the Russian government to develop a constructive and loyal, albeit not necessarily obedient, domestic civil society.[1] Like other regimes outside the Western world such as China (Teets 2013), authorities experiment with governance networks in order to harness the resources of non-state actors (Kropp et al. 2018; Owen & Bindman 2019).

[1] For comprehensive information on legal regulation, see Tarasenko 2018; Benevolenski & Toepler 2017.

The increasing involvement of NGOs becomes particularly evident when investigating social policies (Bindman et al. 2019; Bindman 2015; Bogdanova & Bindman 2016; Johnson et al. 2015; Tarasenko 2015). Accordingly, this study focuses on the social side of Russian anti-drug policy, which is especially suitable for examining the Russian regime's ambivalent collaboration with non-state actors. The policy also mirrors the basic characteristics of welfare transformations in Russia, which combine 'statism, inherited from the Soviet period', with 'neoliberal methods, practiced through new public management' (Tarasenko 2018: 515; Benevolenski & Toepler 2017). Moreover, anti-drug policy is a significant and intriguing example because it is a highly contested political issue. It cuts across various sectoral policies such as health and security and involves different, sometimes competing institutions and actors attached to the state and to non-state organizations. Depending on whether the issue is framed as a health or a security problem, various actors come into play, and different policy instruments are applied. Since governance networks mainly emerge at the local and regional level and are usually governed by regional governments, which can adopt diverging policy approaches, case studies were conducted in two Russian federal subjects, Samara and St. Petersburg. Both regions are highly affected by drug use, and although their main approaches to the problem are similar, they have taken somewhat different paths in coping with it.

In order to carve out the basic characteristics and functioning of governance networks in Russia, the following section opens with conceptual reflections on the specifics of collaboration between state and non-state actors in a hybrid regime. It discusses why authorities involve non-state actors and what defines the limits of collaboration. Given the 'vertical' character of state power, this section considers the leading role of state actors within governance networks and the question of how networks are directed by the authorities. Subsequently, the results of the case studies on anti-drug policy, which offer a thick description, are presented in the empirical section. Finally, the conclusion provides a discussion of the implications of these findings for the involvement of civil society in hybrid regimes.

Theoretical considerations: Why and how do state and non-state actors collaborate in the Russian hybrid regime?

In the prevailing literature, the Russian regime is conceptualized by many as 'hybrid' (Hale 2010; Petrov, Lipman & Hale 2014; Sakwa 2010) since it combines formally democratic institutions with autocratic, often informal, practices which ultimately undermine the rule of law. Beyond that, we argue that a different kind of hybridization materializes due to the Russian authorities' need to gather output legitimacy. In order to improve its policy output, the Russian regime practices a combination of hard and soft tools of governance. 'Vertical' modes such as hierarchy, coercion, and repression – 'hard' tools deemed typical of non-democratic regimes – are combined not only with attempts to initiate market-driven competition among actors and regions (in order to promote 'best' solutions and to test the competence and loyalty of political elites) but also with collaborative, 'softer' modes of governance (Berg-Nordlie et al. 2018; Davies et al. 2016; Kropp et al. 2018). At first glance, it appears somewhat counterintuitive to discover such complex 'patterns of the mix' (Davies 2011: 57) in non-democratic regimes, as they tend to attenuate the power of 'vertically' organized institutions. Consequently, these observations raise the question: What is Russia's rationale for involving non-state actors in policymaking? More specifically: To what extent are state authorities able to configure actor relations within the relevant networks, and what tools do they use to govern governance networks?

In order to conceptualize this issue, the following study considers four components derived from different but overlapping theoretical strands. *First*, assuring output legitimacy and retaining control are highly important objectives when it comes to securing the stability of a non-democratic regime (Gerschewski 2013). From the perspective of transaction costs (North 1992), involving non-state actors in policymaking is a plausible strategy. While repression and

control are costly tools of government, it is less arduous for the rulers to strengthen collaboration with loyal, 'constructive' non-state actors. Nurturing and involving such actors reduces transaction costs in the end, since many of them provide useful information and coordinative capacities. By incorporating non-state actors, extensive supervision becomes obsolete. It is constitutive of the Russian dualistic concept of civil society involvement that state actors use networks not only to solve policy problems and to enhance legitimacy, but also to keep civil society under control (Kropp & Aasland 2018). Given this ambivalent attitude, we argue that a double-sided (and even Janus-faced) approach to civil society is shaping networks in Russia.

A *second* explanation refers to the fact that although Russian state authorities are eager to present themselves as strong and sufficiently competent to regulate all spheres of their citizens' life, Russia's state and administrative capacity is unable to keep up with these self-made expectations. The policy agenda under Putin has increasingly been shaped by the outsourcing of social services and privatization (Tarasenko 2018). Particularly in the sphere of social policies, the sub-federal governments, which are responsible for providing social welfare to citizens, rely on 'socially oriented' NGOs to fulfil their tasks. NGOs and other private actors such as enterprises are essential to developing and implementing official policies because sub-federal governments must cope with severe budgetary restrictions (Zubarevich 2014). On the other hand, the regions are encouraged to invest in non-profit sector development in order to receive federal subsidies for the support of non-profit organizations in return (Tarasenko 2018: 517). Against this background, governance networks serve as 'substitutions' that compensate for insufficient state capacity.

Weak state capacity and the need to reduce transaction costs logically lead to a *third* consideration related to governance theory. Whereas many contributions to governance networks are '…imbued with strong normativity regarding the phenomenon [they] describe[]…' (Berg-Nordlie et al. 2018: 15), our approach is anchored in a more functionalist approach and applies the notion of resource exchange as an analytical framework. Early research on

governance networks employed the argument that network-like collaborations between state and non-state actors emerge because both sides mutually depend on their respective resources (Rhodes 1997; Davies et al. 2016). In fact, state actors often lack information, expertise, personnel, coordinative and implementation capacities, and access to hard-to-reach groups that non-state actors exclusively provide. By cooperating with non-state actors, governments are able to improve their performance and expand output legitimacy. Conversely, civil society organizations work with state authorities because they get official recognition in return. This, again, enhances acceptance within their reference groups. In the Russian context, where civil society organizations have generally moved closer to the state and where governance networks usually revolve around formal state institutions, official endorsement has become especially relevant for many domestic NGOs. By cooperating with state actors, NGOs not only gain access to institutions, budget funding and other favorable (legal, financial) resources but also ensure that they will have some (albeit limited) influence over the political agenda. In view of this resource-oriented strand of governance theory, interdependence among actors generates networks that serve as 'pipes through which scarce resources can circulate' (Owen-Smith & Powell 2013: 618). Considering these arguments, it is logical for Russian state authorities to foster a loyal and 'constructive' domestic civil society whose organizations are ready to cooperate, even though organizations may take an (albeit limited) critical stance towards concrete policy projects ('contested contention'; Cheskin & March 2015; Bindman et al. 2019: 218).

Fourth, the second wave of governance research emphasized that network processes can realize their benefits only if they occur in the 'shadow of hierarchy' cast by the state (Scharpf 1994: 40). Correspondingly, studies have pointed to the permanent role of the state as the 'meta-governor' of governance networks. From this perspective, the state coordinates a myriad of (more or less) self-regulating governance mechanisms and remains an accountable body of last resort in case of governance failure (Bevir & Rhodes 2010; Davies 2012: 2689). This concept, which is named 'meta-governance' (Sørensen & Torfing 2016; Sørensen 2006;

Jessop 1997), particularly matches the Russian context with its strong institutionalization of 'vertical' power. As state authorities usually act as a 'network manager' (Berg-Nordlie et al. 2018), they are able to utilize a flexible combination of tools to govern networks.

By applying Hood's 'tools of government' ('NATO'-framework; see Hood 1983), it is possible to create a fine-grained framework for analyzing collaboration between state and non-state actors in Russia. One of these tools is '*nodality*', a concept that refers to the centrality of an actor in the network and his/her ability to disseminate information among the other network participants. Nodal actors command one of the most effective instruments for governing a network. A second, equally relevant tool is '*authority*'. It strongly relates to legal regulations and the ability to set the rules of the game. Since state authorities have a monopoly on power, this tool usually works in favor of state actors. The third component of the toolkit is '*treasure*', which is concerned with the provision or withdrawal of fiscal resources, on which non-state actors frequently depend. Finally, by commanding '*organization*', through which network decisions can be prepared and implemented, network actors can gain considerable strength. Note that state authorities can apply these tools to networks in either a soft or a hard manner, or they may use a combination of both.

Where to draw the line between these variants is not always easy to determine. As a rule of thumb, '*strong*' *state dominance* is given if state grants and subsidies are limited (treasure) and if regulations are restrictive (authority). In a strongly state-dominated network, state actors are inclined to select representatives of loyal or even amenable NGOs in order to secure their nodal position (nodality) or to altogether exclude critical organizations from network participation. They often exclusively set the agenda and draw on their own organizational capacities for implementation (organization; Kropp & Aasland 2018: 228). '*Soft*' *state dominance*, by contrast, entails non-binding regulations and funding that is not widely used to censor. Non-state actors are able to select the representatives who are seconded to the network. Moreover, in this variant, the networks are able to define objectives autonomously. In

both subtypes of networks, however, the state can rely on its own organization if governance networks do not perform as desired.

It is important to note that hard tools sometimes operate as a mere possibility. In such cases, their application is more implicit than explicit, but their very existence may induce non-state actors to behave in a certain way. Moreover, if mainly 'constructive' and loyal NGOs are incorporated into governance networks, state actors will have no manifest interest in resorting to hard tools. The facilitation of a 'constructive' civil society can thus become a precondition for the use of 'soft' meta-governance tools in a hybrid regime. Although in cases of deficient rule of law authorities can easily switch over to hard tools and arbitrary measures, we do not expect such tools to dominate the relations with civil society organizations insofar as they tend to dissolve networks and impair the desired flow of resources.

Contextualizing Russian governance networks

In the broad and steadily increasing stock of literature on Russian civil society (Flikke 2016; Benevolensky & Toepler 2017), certain pervasive characteristics of networks in the social sphere stand out. Most strikingly, NGOs possess little autonomy. They often lack personnel, sufficient funding, technical infrastructure, and are not acknowledged as legitimate by the public. The authorities expect NGOs to be in line with official policies. With the conservative turn in Russia, accompanied by growing mistrust and restrictive legislation against international actors,[2] governance networks have become more 'Russian', a tendency which we refer to in the following as 'domesticization'. Domestic civil society organizations themselves often expect state authorities to take the lead in networks and to consider their own role as serving and supportive of the state (Myhre & Berg-Nordlie 2016).

[2] See the 'foreign agent law' passed in 2012, which stipulates that civil society organizations receiving funding from abroad must register as 'foreign agents'.

Most important, however, is the fact that it is left largely unclear to what extent non-state actors' behavior is tolerated as critical but still 'constructive'. Even though the dichotomy between civil society's autonomy and extensive co-optation is too rough to explain the characteristics of collaboration (Cheskin & March 2015: 270), Russian authorities have considerable leeway to set regulations and to bypass or even infringe on the rules if they consider it useful and necessary ('authority'). Under conditions of defective rule of law, authorities are widely able to unilaterally define both the opportunities that enable non-state actors and the boundaries that limit them. This also influences the way in which authorities govern the networks, since it is not necessary to apply explicit 'hard' tools to the networks to compel a certain type of behavior. Authorities can leave open the question of whether a critical attitude is regarded as 'antagonistic'. We assume that this latent uncertainty widely affects the work of civil society actors within networks while at the same time strengthening the nodal position of state actors.

Notwithstanding these limitations, some characteristics of the state organization tend to slightly open the space for NGOs ('organization'). The Russian state cannot be perceived as a unitary actor. Various state actors within the 'power vertical' pursue different goals. As the Russian institutional setting provides a highly fragmented administrative and multilevel architecture, it comprises competing and sometimes even conflicting institutional logics. Measures and rules in different institutional arenas do not necessarily harmonize. Although Putin created the hegemonic party 'Edinaya Rossiya', which was thought to stabilize the 'power vertical' running from the center to the regions and to reintegrate renegade forces (Starodubtsev 2018), the party has not formed a monolithic bloc. It rather reflects crosscutting regional interests, the rulers' individual ambitions, and diverging policy positions. Considering this (albeit limited) intra-party and federal diversity, the development of regional variations and different approaches on the part of sub-national entities in the field of social service provision is not surprising (Tarasenko 2018).

In addition, the sectoral organization within the government also causes institutional fragmentation. Which ministry and which administrative tiers are responsible for an issue is the

most important question: depending on whether this issue is framed as a health problem or is more securitized, actor constellations and problem-solving strategies vary considerably. State and non-state actors can potentially exploit sectoral organization to promote their preferred policy approaches. Yet, as the past years have witnessed an ongoing shift towards the securitization of social policies in Russia (Pape 2014; Kropp & Aasland 2018), we expect to find a respective framing of this policy issue, although this may vary across the regions.

Another significant factor shaping NGO involvement in Russia is the growing importance of market-driven approaches vis-à-vis non-state actors. In general, governments around the world, including authoritarian and hybrid regimes, have increasingly applied the toolkit of New Public Management (NPM), which serves as an effective and cost-efficient instrument for including non-profit organizations in policymaking. While this approach aims at the better targeting of social services, the independence and self-determination of NGOs must be balanced with the government's objectives of efficiency and equity (Salamon & Toepler 2015; Tarasenko 2018: 521). NGOs become 'vendors' selling their products in order to obtain a contract, while their cooperation with the state may reinforce the bureaucratization of nonprofit organizations. Thus, it was frequently claimed that the NPOs' roles as providers of services on the one hand and as representatives of social groups on the other become blurred.

By utilizing the NPM toolkit, the Russian government supports projects that disseminate 'best practices' (mainly with regard to cooperation with government agencies), arranges open competitions for funding among suppliers, closes contracts with NGOs, and sets up independent councils and agencies which monitor the performance of NGOs that receive financial support from state budgets ('treasure'). Needy citizens are conceived as 'clients' who choose among organizations (NGOs) or as social entrepreneurs seeking to obtain social services. Although these NPM tools are among the 'softer' tools of government, they potentially foster the asymmetries between state and non-state actors. This danger is real if financial dependency is high and if state authorities enjoy encompassing control over resources (Salamon & Toepler 2015). These conditions are widely realized in the Russian context.

Summing up thus far, our framework corroborates the general assumption that basic state and non-state actors share an interest in collaborating and formalizing governance networks in the field of anti-drug policy. Depending on whether the policy is framed as health or a security issue, state authorities make use of varying combinations of hard and soft tools of meta-governance. Even though this article is dedicated to the social side of anti-drug policy, all considerations suggest the strong dominance of state actors within the networks. At the same time, our framework leads us to expect variance across cases.

Data and methodology

Fieldwork was carried out in the 2013-15 period in two federal subjects (regions) of Russia: Samara and St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg is a major metropolitan city with a federal subject status of its own. Samara, one of the more populous federal subjects in Russia, comprises a larger geographical area with several cities (Samara city being the largest), towns and rural municipalities. The regions were selected due to their high incidence of drug use and drug-related social problems (Golovchin 2015). As will be shown below, however, the two regions are rather different when it comes to the civil society landscape in the field and forms of collaboration between authorities and civil society.

The data were collected in two steps. First, we conducted exploratory interviews in early 2013 with key experts (academics, journalists, activists) in the two regions to identify the main institutions, civil society organizations and collaborative structures that operate in drug prevention and in the treatment and rehabilitation of drug users. Second, we carried out 19 semi-structured interviews with the key stakeholders identified during the exploratory phase: government officials and policy-makers, representatives of both state and private institutions, civil society (mostly NGOs), and experts participating in various collaborating structures. We used common interview guides for these interviews, which were adapted to the specifics of each type of informant and allowed the necessary flexibility to follow up on issues that could

enhance our understanding of the topic. Project researchers also conducted observations of five formal governance network meetings to which they had gained access.[3] The aim of these observations was to identify participants, the presence or absence of debate and critical voices, and negotiations and decision-making. We also made use of semi-structured interviews conducted at the federal level by one of the authors within a project on HIV-AIDS prevention (2008-2010), where a main focus was the prevention of HIV among drug users (see Aasland et al. 2013). In addition to the interviews and observations, and in order to complete method triangulation, the paper is also based on analysis of documents (legislation, policy strategies, journal and newspaper articles).

The interviews were recorded (when allowed by the informants), transcribed (in Russian) and coded in Nvivo 11 Pro. To protect the anonymity of the informants, we promised that they would not be named or identified in project publications. Thus, for citations in the article we only refer to the region and category of the respondent.[4]

Russian anti-drug policy, main actors and arenas for collaboration

The two pillars of Russian anti-drug policy

Russian anti-drug policy consists of two pillars, the first being combatting drug trafficking, the second coping with the prevention of drug use and the treatment of drug dependence. The state's attention to the first pillar has consistently dominated its concern for the second. President Putin's 2002 speech in which he characterized drugs as a national security threat and the 2003 establishment of a new security agency, the Federal Service for Drug Control

[3] These consisted of a regional anti-drug commission meeting (Samara); a cross-sectoral meeting related to institutional gaps in the regional system of drug users' social rehabilitation and resocialisation (St. Petersburg); a patients' forum (a closed regular meeting of HIV-positive drug users, activists and medical institutions representatives) (St. Petersburg); a public council meeting organized by a federal level hospital under the jurisdiction of the Committee for Social Policy (St. Petersburg); and a cross-sectoral federal-level meeting of civil society and state authorities (Moscow), all of which were organized in 2014.

[4] The project was approved by the Review Board of the Research Council of Norway.

(FSKN), reinforced the securitization of Russian drug policy (Marshall 2014). This means that security aspects of the fight against drugs promoted by security and law enforcement agencies have dominated over 'softer' drug policy approaches, often expressed by medical and social work stakeholders. Thus, Russian policies have remained punitive and show a clear preference for enforcement measures over demand reduction and rehabilitation (Lunze et al. 2015). The security discourse typically links drug abuse to threats from organized crime, regional terrorism and adverse demographic developments (Galeotti 2016).

As regards the first pillar, there is no tradition for involving civil society, and it is strictly confined to the framework of state security. When it comes to the second pillar, however, which is the focus of this article, since the breakup of the Soviet Union the state has tolerated (and since about 2010 more actively encouraged) the involvement of civil society in activities directed towards drug users. From the mid-1990s and up to around 2010, civil society was quite active in targeted work on the prevention and treatment of drug use. At the time, this activity was predominantly funded by international donors such as the Global Fund, the Soros Foundation, USAIDS and others. For state and non-state professionals in the field, international funding was in high demand, and it involved not only material support but also scientifically founded and innovative methods of working with drug users (Sereda & Brednikova 2017). International seminars and conferences, professional visits, and formalized international exchange laid the foundation for the first informal cross-sectoral networks around the drug issue.

During this period, the authorities also accepted a great variety of measures directed towards active drug users, including needle exchange programs and diverse non-traditional addiction treatment therapies, for the most part involving non-state actors (Marshall 2014). Both St. Petersburg and Samara were in the Russian forefront when it comes to civil society involvement in anti-drug activities, with the support of international funding and the implicit and sometimes explicit support of regional authorities. Following Russia's loss of eligibility for funding from the Global Fund, and following its gradual introduction, from 2012 onwards, of more repressive measures towards civil society organizations that received foreign funding

and engaged in what they defined to be political activities, such alternative approaches were met with more resistance from the authorities. Harm reduction programs and other services directed towards active drug users were curtailed or closed, and the law on foreign agents was in several cases applied to NGOs that still offered such services, even though socially oriented organizations should in principle be exempt from registering as foreign agents (King 2017).

At first glance, this trend would indicate the further securitization of the second pillar of Russia's drug policy. However, in parallel with this tendency, prominent stakeholders, including those in the drug control apparatus, recognized the serious social impact of narcotics and the failure of Russian drug policy to rehabilitate drug users. Acknowledging the shortcomings of state-sponsored detoxification programs, there was a growing consensus that policy changes were needed. President Vladimir Putin launched a national anti-drug policy in 2010, mandating the FSKN to create a nationwide interagency 'rehabilitation and re-socialization' program for drug addicts. An important goal was to strengthen cross-sectoral and interdepartmental collaboration, as well as cooperation with civil society in combating drug use. Important innovations included the use of treatment as an alternative to incarceration in cases involving the use of narcotic substances and the 'resocialization' of drug users for their return to their families and society as 'able citizens and taxpayers'. The sub-program developed by FSKN on rehabilitation and resocialization (PRR) describes several steps that lead drug addicts through the process of treatment from drug addiction, rehabilitation from drug dependence and resocialization in the local community (Shinkevich & Fedorova 2016).

In line with the NPM turn in Russian welfare policy, non-state actors such as NGOs and private rehabilitation centers were given a more prominent and defined role in this new set-up. The almost complete withdrawal of foreign funding had made civil society more dependent on state funds; hence, they needed to adjust further to the state's policies and priorities. The program's emphasis on coordination and collaboration with non-state actors thus opened new and welcome opportunities for NGOs and other non-state actors for collaboration with state institutions.

Main actors at the federal and the regional level

The main executor of anti-drug policy at the federal and the regional level is the drugs control authority. From 2003 to 2016 (thus during the time of our fieldwork), issues related to the use and trafficking of drugs were the responsibility of the Federal Drug Control Service (FSKN), with a hierarchical set-up of institutions in all federal subjects, as well as regional and local territorial units.[5] FSKN's most important functions were to develop state drug policy and implement the activities of the state Anti-Drug Committees (ADCs), which are responsible for coordinating all levels of executive power as regards drug policy in the Russian Federation. FSKN formulated the above-mentioned state anti-drug program.

Other key institutions include narcological hospitals and state organizations working in the field of social policy and social protection of the population. Narcological hospitals deal mainly with medicine in the form of detoxifying drug users and providing them with first medical aid. In the absence of sufficient federal funding for the implementation of PRR, the ADCs and FSKN appointed agencies in the field of social services to be responsible for the social rehabilitation and resocialization parts of the sub-program. In St. Petersburg, this was the Social Policy Committee, while in Samara it was the Ministry of Social Affairs, Demography and Family Policy.

However, these institutions lacked the necessary experience and methodological knowledge concerning the social rehabilitation and resocialization of drug users. Thus, regional authorities found it necessary to establish additional coordination structures. In St. Petersburg, this led to the establishment of the Educational and Methodological Department for Social Rehabilitation and the Resocialization of Persons with Dependent and Co-dependent Behavior (UMO) under the Committee for Social Policy, while in the Samara Region the Coordination Council for

[5] In 2016, FSKN was reorganized as a unit under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Since FSKN was still in operation during the implementation of the project and our fieldwork, in this article we refer to this agency when we have the Russian drug control authorities in mind.

Integrated Rehabilitation and Resocialization was established. Both structures perform similar functions: They select sub-program executors (including from the civil society sector), monitor the implementation of anti-drug policies in the field, and coordinate inter-sectoral and interagency cooperation. Still, there are also significant differences between the two structures. The structure and organization of the work of the Coordination Council of the Samara Region is practically identical to the structural and organizational set-up of the ADCs. In terms of its structure, degree of independence and mode of operation, St. Petersburg's UMO is more like an internal department of a state institution with much more autonomous policy influence.

In small municipalities that experience severe resource constraints, the division between state institutions and NGOs is often blurred. In such municipalities, the state institutions responsible for drug policy also implement social rehabilitation and re-socialization, but then often in the capacity of so-called socially-oriented non-profit organisations (SONKOs). We found this to be the case in some of the municipalities in the Samara region.

St. Petersburg and Samara also differ when it comes to the civil society landscape. In Samara, we were only able to identify a handful of NGOs working on anti-drug issues, and some of these turned out to exist only on paper. In St. Petersburg, on the other hand, though the number of NGOs in the field had been shrinking, there were still a considerable number of active organizations, with much broader variation in terms of activities and methodological approaches than in Samara. In addition, civil society groups in St. Petersburg had much more funding available to them and a wider range of funding opportunities. At the time of our fieldwork, a few civil society groups in St. Petersburg continued to work with international donors, while all international funding for work with drug users had been withdrawn in Samara. The majority of organizations are registered as 'public associations' (*obshchestvennye organizatsii*) and operate at the regional level, but many are also members of countrywide networks. One particular type of civil society group is the *Narcotics Anonymous* movement that consists of current and former drug addicts, motivating them to pursue resocialization.

The Russian Orthodox Church also plays an important role in the civil society landscape of both federal subjects. Its Special Committee for the fight against drug addiction collaborates with state officials in providing non-medical rehabilitation services and is engaged in resocialization activities. The church is represented as a participant in civil society in many of the formalized governance networks around the drug issue. In addition, in both St. Petersburg and Samara, the Protestant church is a key actor in the non-medical rehabilitation of drug users and has been unofficially integrated into the state Program on Rehabilitation and the Resocialization of drug users. When it comes to governance networks, however, the Orthodox Church is a much more prominent actor, invited into virtually all network formations as a member or contributor, whereas the Protestant Church is confined to medical networks alone.

Arenas for state/non-state collaboration

Within the 'second pillar' of Russian drug policy at the regional level (i.e. concerning drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation), three types of collaboration between state and non-state actors remain central. The first are the *regional and local anti-drug commissions (ADCs*), which sometimes involve civil society organizations, if not always as participants then at least as experts or collaborating partners. The second type are various *consultative councils* and other formalized governance network arenas, where drug-related issues are put on the agenda on a regular or a more ad-hoc basis. The third concerns the *implementation of the PRR program* with an enhanced role for civil society and non-state rehabilitation centers.

Regional and local anti-drug commissions

At the time of the fieldwork, the ADCs were a structure under the FSKN umbrella, and the regional commissions are replications of the central state ADC. The commissions have rather fixed memberships, which involve all major sectors in anti-drug activities. At the regional level, they are headed by the governor and have high-level representatives from a variety of regional ministries and state institutions. Though the commissions are dominated by state actors, in

both Samara and St. Petersburg they included a member from the regional Public Chamber. The ADCs also frequently invite experts from civil society or the academic community to participate in commission meetings. The ADC membership is less fixed at the municipal level, where some commissions include permanent non-state members while others only invite them in as experts to provide information on specific issues.

The ADCs play an important role in the coordination of anti-drug policies at the regional level. This coordination is both vertical, between different levels of government, and horizontal, between different sectors involved in anti-drug activities. In terms of policy formulation and decisions, the commissions have an advisory function for the responsible ministries. However, the ADCs also make joint decisions about the implementation of policies. An additional task performed by the commissions is to monitor policies in the sector.

Regional consultative councils and other formal arenas for collaboration

Both Samara and St. Petersburg have several consultative councils, including the regional public chambers, which consist of or include representatives of civil society. Since drugs are recognized by the authorities to be a huge challenge in both St. Petersburg and Samara, some of these either regularly or occasionally raise drug-related issues. In the regional public chambers, anti-drug policy has been the main theme in both plenary sessions and specific thematic sessions. The Regional Dumas in both Samara and St. Petersburg have public consultative councils attached to them, where drug policy issues are raised rather frequently. Moreover, both regions have high incidences of HIV and AIDS, which is transmitted in large part through intravenous drug use (Aasland & Meylakhs 2018). Thus, in St. Petersburg there is a dedicated HIV coordination council with civil society representation, while Samara does not have a council specifically targeting HIV.

In addition to the consultative councils, both NGOs and state institutions have organized round-table discussions on drug-related issues for the exchange of information and the initiation of

joint actions. By the time of our fieldwork, however, the frequency of such conferences and round-tables, organized by civil society, had reduced due to the decreased funding of NGOs (especially international funding). Youth parliaments and on-site seminars are additional initiatives where state and non-state actors collaborate on anti-drug activities. Finally, a cluster of state-run grant schemes (federal and regional) have been established, through which non-state actors may receive funding for the implementation of projects directed towards drug users.

A complex program for the rehabilitation and resocialization of drug users

As noted above, the anti-drug program initiated by president Putin in 2010 and developed by FSKN prescribed the enhanced role of non-state actors in its PRR subprogram. The program was not adopted until 2015. Since the concept had been prepared over a long period, when we were conducting our field research both state and non-state actors were in the process of adjusting their activities in line with the reforms stipulated in PRR. The most important element of PRR is the formation of a regional structure for the rehabilitation and resocialization of drug addicts. Non-state accredited rehabilitation centers are given a prominent role in this system, which is based on state funding and where the money follows the client. With their close contact with drug addicts, NGOs were furthermore expected to contribute to identifying them and motivating them to pursue treatment and rehabilitation. At the time of our fieldwork, however, there was still some ambiguity as regards how all the measures outlined in PRR would be financed. This ambiguity persisted even after PRR had been adopted.

Findings: State dominance, domesticization, and mutual benefits

In accordance with our theoretical expectations, and much in line with previous studies on governance networks in Russia in other societal sectors (see e.g. Kropp et al. 2018), the fieldwork and document analysis identified three major themes that characterize regional interaction between state and non-state actors in the field of anti-drug policies. The *first* is marked state dominance and control. Our study confirms that there are important nuances between the more securitized and the socio-medical aspects of the policy field, i.e. between the first and the second pillars described above. *Second*, since 2012 there has been a tendency towards the enhanced domesticization of anti-drug policies, where Russian actors have largely receded from their previous integration into international collaborative structures and have become more attuned to common national goals and priorities. As will be shown, this has made NGOs and other non-state actors more dependent on the Russian state and the regional governance networks for funding and activity forms. *Third*, non-state actors contribute vital resources needed by the state and also gain significant benefits from the collaboration, although this interdependency also entails costs for critical NGOs, e.g. in terms of constraints on their freedom of action. In the following, we will look into each of these themes in further detail.

Asymmetries between state and non-state actors

The arenas for collaboration between state and non-state actors described above have been initiated, formed and are overseen by the state. This gives the state virtually full control over the interaction with the involved non-state actors. The main governance network arenas, in particular the ADCs but also many of the consultative councils, are part of multilevel organizational structures that commence at the federal level and are replicated at the regional, and sometimes the municipal/local, level. High-level state officials chair the sessions, and the secretariats who prepare and operate between the meetings are usually also filled with members of the state administration. They prepare the meeting agenda, and non-state actors only rarely take their own initiative as to the issues to be handled at the network meetings.

Furthermore, although input from various societal actors had been encouraged during the elaboration of PRR, none of our informants told us that they had provided input on the program.

For the ADCs, the choice of which ministries and other state institutions should be represented is usually described in detail, and there is little flexibility in terms of participation. Other consultative councils are normally less strict in terms of their composition, but membership is usually controlled and restricted to organizations that are perceived to be loyal to state policies in the field. We found few critical organisations in the network arenas studied in the two cities, and NGOs overtly opposed to state policies on controversial issues such as harm reduction (needle exchange, substitution therapy) were not invited. The organizations on the inside tend to be careful in terms of how they pursue such sensitive issues, but they are rarely discussed in the network arenas anyway.

We found that when non-state actors are invited to the governance networks or to other forms of interaction with the state, they are invited not as representatives of specific interests but as experts who can give professional advice or implement tasks and services within the anti-drug field. Thus, what is called for is 'neutral and objective' expert input rather than open and critical debate. Diverging views and interests tend to be downplayed and are usually seen as undesirable. A typical answer to the question whether disagreements are common in the commission came from an ADC member in Samara:

> According to my memories, there have not been any. Working discussions, yes, but any fundamentally opposed points of view […], they do not occur. […] In this respect, our anti-drug commission is such a strong working body; that means there could be some divergence when it comes to small details, but fundamental disagreements between the members of the commission, or between participating institutions in the commission, no, we do not have them [ADC member, Samara].

The more securitized ADCs under the (then) FSKN umbrella appeared to have less tolerance for disagreement than the consultative councils set up by health authorities. Furthermore, the

expression of differing views seemed to be more common in governance networks in St. Petersburg than in Samara.

All of the networks we studied fulfil an advisory function, while actual policy decisions are made by the responsible ministries. The function of the networks is usually the coordination of action rather than the facilitation of collective decision-making. Nevertheless, informants gave several examples where policy decisions had been influenced by recommendations made in the governance networks, and informants from civil society believed they had an influence on concrete policy issues. Policy impact is rarely their main motivation for participating in the networks, however, a theme to which we will return below.

Regardless of the type of governance network, in our observations of network meetings we noted that the networks had a rather similar formal structure. The head (or designated head) of the meeting would usually present the issue(s) to be discussed and convey what is to be expected from the network (information sharing, cross-sectional coordination, input or advice into policy processes, etc.), fixing the required output. The present participants would then speak, seemingly in an order of rank, often indicated by the formal seating arrangements. Participants or invited experts from NGOs and civil society would usually speak at the end unless they were called to present more thorough accounts or briefings to the audience before a discussion. Most of the interventions would be prepared beforehand, and we observed little spontaneous discussion, although clarifying questions were commonly asked and replies given.

Another key characteristic of relations between state and non-state actors identified during our case studies is the importance of personal relations and informal networks. This was stressed by many of our informants, both within state structures and in civil society. Personal relations affect the distribution of resources, decisions about which organizations are 'insiders' and which are 'outsiders', what non-state actors are able to achieve, and how they operate. The boundaries between civil society and public authorities often intersect, and the roles of the

NGOs are blurred. Some of the NGO-based network participants are simultaneously employed as professionals in the state structures. NGO members sometimes have experience from work in the state bureaucracy or in the state system of social care. The same individuals may perform tasks for an organization and for the state simultaneously, without questions being asked about their primary commitment.

All of our observations and interviews, then, confirmed the state's dominance in its interaction with non-state actors. Only non-controversial themes were brought up in the ADCs and the consultative councils we observed. It is noteworthy, however, that we did not observe instances where the state applied overt coercion on NGOs. Whether this is explained by actual general agreement among participants on core issues (as asserted by several ADC members) or self-censorship and more subtle forms of discipline (as indicated by informants from more critical NGOs outside the governance networks) is an open question.

The domesticization of drug policy

At the time of the fieldwork, the withdrawal of most foreign funding agencies supporting work with drug addicts in Russia had already taken place. A few NGOs in St. Petersburg still received funding from foreign donors, but in both regions most NGOs financed their activities through state funds or relied on voluntary efforts, while for example the collection of membership fees or grants from the private sector was a much less common means of financing activities. The lack of foreign funding therefore had serious implications. In both St. Petersburg and Samara, some NGOs had previously been engaged in harm reduction activities (such as needle exchange) funded by international donors. Most of these organizations had either ceased to exist or adjusted their activities to be more in line with government priorities.

In the same period, Russia underwent a conservative turn, with emphasis on 'traditional' and 'patriotic' values. This also encompassed a perceived need to develop a specifically sovereign

Russian approach to the drug problem, with implications for the governance network set-up. In the field of anti-drug policies, needle exchange programs and other targeted prevention measures directed at drug users were discouraged, and more general prevention measures such as the promotion of a 'healthy lifestyle' were prioritized. This pattern was clearly visible in both case studies. The provision of harm reduction had virtually disappeared in the Russian regions by the time of our fieldwork. A few small-scale programs still operated in both places, but they then formed a minor and often virtually hidden part of larger and more complex programs. In line with the conservative discourse, authorities were more likely to support measures directed towards 'innocent' victims such as children than to those who were allegedly themselves to blame for the addiction. Many NGOs adjusted their activities accordingly:

> But if we talk about our role in drug policy, we try through those channels that may work. For example, women and children. But [...] drug users, they are not interesting to anyone, because they are often [considered] to have the blame themselves. From which side do we approach this? There are women and children. […B]ecause where there are children, they cannot be blamed, so one has to provide assistance through their mothers, including those using drugs, during pregnancy and birth, and during social rehabilitation. We look for ways of arguing that this could work. Women and children, that's a good argument in my opinion [NGO representative, St. Petersburg].

Another very visible trend in both regions – one that tends to reinforce the conservative (and anti-Western) tendency described above – is the enhanced role of the Russian Orthodox Church in drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The Church was an active participant in several of the governance networks that we examined in both regions and was invited in as a representative of civil society. It is also very active in providing rehabilitation services to drug addicts as part of the PRR program. The close interaction between the state and the Church in anti-drug actions and anti-drug governance networks has contributed to strengthening the Russian national approach (built on 'Russian traditional values') to the drug problem.

Although some of our informants from civil society (especially those in opposition to the official Russian anti-drug policies) lamented the withdrawal of foreign funding sources, others were critical of the former reliance on foreign funding and thought that domestic funding would enable a more systematic approach to the drug issue:

> As long as we had international funding, everyone strived to receive a grant […]. A huge minus with these grants was that they were completely unsystematic. That is, for some time you worked in one direction, the next day you were moving in a different direction. The only thing that was positive was that you were paid for this work. Nothing remained here, nothing new was invented. […W]e have lost the money, but in return the opportunity to work in a targeted manner has emerged [Professional health worker, St. Petersburg].

Mutual benefits of the collaboration and the interdependency of actors

The previous two sections may perhaps leave the reader with the misguided impression that non-state actors only play a minor role in Russian anti-drug policy. In fact, state–civil society interaction in the socio-medical sphere is significant, and although they are controlled and dominated by the state, non-state actors perform important functions for the state. Elsewhere, we have emphasized the importance of building legitimacy for state policy as a major reason for the state's involvement of civil society in governance networks (Aasland et al. 2016; Aasland & Meylakhs 2018; Berg-Nordlie et al. 2018). Although this appears to be the case for governance networks on drug policy as well, what was mentioned more often by informants from state bureaucracy as a motivation for involving civil society actors is more mundane, namely making use of the human resources they provide. As is the case in many welfare states, Russian policy-makers seek to rationalize and cut costs in the public sector, a trend that is often associated with NPM. Thus, if they can exploit the human resources of civil society, they can provide services to drug addicts at a lower cost. Some of the governance networks

we encountered were also used to perform the distribution of grants to NGOs and other non-state actors, and federal and regional grant schemes for drug prevention and service delivery were another arena for interaction between the state and the civil society sector in the field.

Non-state actors also have experience, knowledge and information that the state authorities need for policy-making. By making use of such actors, the state may be able to make the implementation of policy run more smoothly. One further motivation for involving civil society in governance networks and other forms of collaboration (one that is quite specific to this policy field) is the organisations' better access to the target groups. Stigmatized groups such as drug addicts often mistrust state institutions. NGOs, on the other hand, often consisting of or including current or former drug addicts themselves, tend to have much more affinity and direct contact with the target groups:

> And we do not have, let's say, access to the vulnerable group, because after all they are a vulnerable group, they are quite closed in my view, and they do not let all people approach them. So yes, if we are to conduct, for example, some preventive measures, let's say make them go for testing [for HIV], or if someone after that has turned out to test positive and then this [drug addict] needs help to get treatment, then we need civil society organizations that have the resources, that have the physical people (that is, staff), that have the competence, and that have access to these closed groups [State administration official, St. Petersburg].

It is not only the state that benefits from collaboration with the non-state actors; indeed, the gains are reciprocal. Non-state actors tend to value interactions with the state very highly, and our assessment is that they need the state more than the state needs them. For some NGOs, their main motivation for participating in governance networks was access to authorities for solving organizational issues or for obtaining funding and information. For most NGO informants, this was a much stronger motivating factor than their perceived actual influence on

policy. Furthermore, organizations receive symbolic legitimation from participating, and this is important for their societal standing and prestige.

Informal network-building was an additional motivation for non-state actors' participation in formal governance networks in the drug sphere. Informal contact to solve urgent issues takes place between meetings, often in the form of telephone conversations. Both state and non-state actors stressed the reciprocal benefits of such informal relations, in which both sides need to contribute resources, typically in the form of information, support or material benefits. The informal links between network members were activated to solve issues connected not only to network activities but also to external activities of importance to the participants.

Some NGOs admitted to participating simply because it was expected of them, without any clear idea about what they were going to achieve or any deep understanding of their role. One informant expressed that his organization members used a variety of methods in their work and that their strategy was to hope that some of them would lead to the desired impact: 'It is like throwing macaroni on the wall and hoping that some of it will stick' (NGO representative, St. Petersburg).

Drug policy is a sensitive issue, and some organizations seemed to participate so that they would not be considered disloyal or otherwise suspect by the authorities. For other organizations, participation in state-run governance networks was out of the question for the same reason; they did not want to associate themselves with state policies or lose their freedom. With lack of alternative funding from international donors, such organizations have largely to rely on their own resources. Thus, state/non-state interaction is based on loyal and supportive civil society actors. For most organizations that support or are willing to adapt to government policies and priorities, this is not considered a big cost, but others think the price is too high and continue to operate outside the state framework or withdraw from the field.

Concluding discussion

What lessons can be drawn from our case studies? Anti-drug policy fits the notion of a 'wicked' social problem that requires input from and coordination between a variety of societal actors. Russia's set-up for solving social problems is still characterized by a high degree of specialization and vertical structures typical of the Soviet era. Both state and non-state actors clearly depend on each other's resources. Governance networks have been established to facilitate coordination and inter-sectional collaboration, primarily between state structures at different levels of government. The involvement of NGOs and other non-state actors in the field is highly encouraged by the authorities as long as they are loyal to state policy and constructive in pursuing the state's priorities. The case studies confirmed that NGOs are also interested in, and benefit from, such participation.

Within the networks, however, state actors clearly take the dominating and central position (*nodality*), although, as is also noted by Owen & Bindman (2019), this does not mean that hard or even coercive tools are applied to non-state participants. Rather, the study reveals a combination of meta-governance tools that can be seen as typical of the current Russian approach to governance networks (Kropp & Aasland 2018). We found two nodes – one based in drug control, the other in health authorities – which are competing information sources. Both control their own sphere, and individually none has a monopoly on information. In cases of diverging interests between the two, however, the drug control authorities were virtually always in a position to take ascendancy. The drug control sphere is also more hierarchically controlled from the center, while the regional health authorities have more leeway for regional variation.

The *authority* tool is characterized by a law that sets clear limits on what different actors can do (Bogdanova & Bindman 2016). For health and social issues where there is more regional independence, the network actors still tend to comply carefully with federal recommendations, a tendency that has intensified over time. Instead of applying hard tools, however, fear of losing access to networks, money and other resources was normally enough to discipline network

participants. When it comes to *treasure,* the underfunding of the sector makes network participation one of the few available entry points for state funding. Compared to funding for other socially oriented organizations to which the state gives higher priority, such as those targeting the elderly, the disabled and children (Bindman 2015), there are few available grant programs in the drug sphere; to compete for the limited available funds, loyal and constructive network participation is the norm. Relying on international funding, on the other hand, in practice currently implies distancing oneself from the relevant governance network arenas. Finally, in terms of *organization*, it is normally the state that initiates, runs and selects participants for the governance networks, a finding also familiar from studies of governance networks in other social spheres (see e.g. Aasland et al. 2016). The organizational tool is used as a way to derive resources from, but at the same time to control the involvement of, non-state actors.

The social and health aspects of anti-drug policy are prime examples of a field where NPM is taking a firm grip. In particular, the State Program on the Rehabilitation and Resocialization of Drug Users builds on the systematic use of the resources of private actors in the provision of services that were formerly the sole responsibility of the state. In this connection, it is worth noting the vocabulary used by public officials and professionals in the sphere to describe drug users. Whereas they had once been described as criminals engaged in deviant behavior, drug users gradually came to be seen as patients in need of treatment. The next step, however, has been to describe them as 'clients' and customers in a market where they can independently opt for individually tailored services and where the money follows the client. However, given insufficient funding and lack of resources, along with prevailing attitudes among health and social workers towards these 'clients', it is highly questionable how much agency the majority of drug users can exercise in their real-life situations.

Drug policy in Russia is highly securitized, and we found that non-state actors have virtually no role in activities relating to drug trafficking and other drug-related crime (the first pillar of Russian drug policy). This is no surprise given increased state control over NGOs that are

perceived as a threat to state sovereignty and security (Skokova et al. 2018). The fact that many of the socio-medical aspects of anti-drug policy are also placed under the responsibility of the FSKN (now the Interior Ministry) no doubt affects the way in which these problems are handled; drug problems tend to be treated from a state security rather than a health perspective. This applies, for example, to forms of harm reduction (e.g. needle exchange) that health authorities are much more likely to support but which the drug control authorities do not usually tolerate.

We should therefore be careful about treating the Russian state as a unified actor shaped by strict chains of subordination. Our empirical data confirmed variation among state institutions and the governance networks for which they are responsible when it came to their approaches to drug policy – variations which were also found in other studies of governance networks in Russia (Kropp et al. 2018). While the regional and local ADCs tended to be the most streamlined and functioned as an instrument for the implementation of policies directed by the state at the federal level, there was much more leeway for alternative views and approaches in governance networks formed by regional initiatives, especially those that focused on the social aspects of drug policy. Much federal policy is formulated in the form of non-binding recommendations, and it is often up to the regional level whether these will be followed. We found St. Petersburg, with its more diverse institutional framework, to be more receptive to open discussion and debate among actors and to making its own decisions regarding such social issues.

This fragmented institutional set-up also has implications for relations between state and civil society actors. Though some issues cannot be touched on by any actors (for example the use of methadone and other substitution therapies), for other issues actors from state and non-state institutions can form alliances, exchange information, make use of networks within and outside of the state bureaucracy, and thereby strengthen their positions. Such alliances tend to be more informal than formal in nature, and the actors need to assess their room for

manoeuver carefully within the limitations set by the network governor or other officials with a veto power.

The blurred relations that we identified between state and civil society actors are facilitated by the perception among actors that the public sphere and civil society share the same interests and work towards the common good rather than having opposing interests. The frequent exchange of personnel between the public and the non-state sectors may indeed strengthen the bonds in the network arenas and the competence of the state- and the NGO-sector alike. At the same time, it may transfer the loyalty of NGO-based participants to the state or to the network – although in Russian network governance discourse, such a transfer of loyalty is often constructed as conducive to network operations.

To sum up, the Russian approach to network governance is designed to produce harmonious relations. Non-state actors may be critical, and conflicts do occur, but antagonistic behaviour is undesired. For non-state actors, however, it is sometimes difficult to assess where exactly the authorities draw the line between legitimate critique and unwanted 'nuisances'. One can read the results of our case studies as evidence confirming a distinct anti-pluralist attitude shaping network relations because it is mainly the state that stipulates *a priori* what is concretely to be defined as the 'common good'. The Russian market-driven NPM approach to social policy further strengthens the definitional power of the state. The state increasingly adopts efficiency criteria to meet the goals of professionalization and cost-reduction. In this view, the common good does not result from legitimate conflicts and subsequent mediation between competing social forces. In fact, interest representation is not the main objective of Russian NGOs. In this regard, Russian governance networks serve as an instrument created to render policy-making more effective and to enhance the performance and output legitimacy of the Russian regime. Its democracy-enhancing capacity, however, remains limited.

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