Organizing Civil Society in Russia and China: A Comparative Approach

James Richter & Walter F. Hatch

International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society

ISSN 0891-4486

Int J Polit Cult Soc
DOI 10.1007/s10767-013-9148-5

Springer

Int J Polit Cult Soc
DOI 10.1007/s10767-013-9148-5

Organizing Civil Society in Russia and China: A Comparative Approach

James Richter · Walter F. Hatch

Abstract Despite their authoritarian tendencies, the current regimes in Russia and China have both actively promoted stronger civil societies. This article explores this apparent paradox for insights both into the meaning of civil society and into the nature of governance in these two regimes. It argues that the social organizations that make up civil society both inhabit and construct a public sphere where individuals assist in their own governance. Recognizing that administered societies cannot compete in a globalizing economy, these regimes look to social organizations to perform functions previously left to the state, but at the same time use similar repertoires of regulation, revenue control, and repression to ensure such organizations do not transgress acceptable boundaries. Still, different notions of state–society relations in the two countries have led to different patterns of social organizations in the two countries. In Russia, a sharp distinction between state and society has contributed to a government strategy that seeks to dominate the public sphere leaving little room for autonomous civic action. In China, by contrast, deeply embedded institutionalized accounts see state and society as overlapping spheres of activity, creating pyramid-like structures encompassing both state-based and more autonomous organizations, and allowing more room for negotiation between the two.

Keywords Civil society · Market reform · Authoritarianism · Russia · China

Ever since the velvet revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe, the term "civil society" has been intimately associated with democratic consolidation (see especially Diamond 1994). A robust civil society, it was argued, empowers citizens to participate in their own governance, express their demands more effectively, and keep states accountable. It seems curious, then, that the regimes in both China and Russia, not known for their commitment to democracy, should actively promote a stronger civil society in their own countries. Leaders in the Chinese Communist Party have praised the virtues of a "small government, big society"

J. Richter (✉)
Department of Politics, Bates College, Lewiston, ME 04240, USA
e-mail: jrichter@bates.edu

W. F. Hatch
Department of Government, Colby College, Waterville, ME, USA
e-mail: wfhatch@colby.edu

Published online: 10 August 2013

(*xiao zhengfu, da shehui*) since the 1990s, and in Russia, President Vladimir Putin declared as early as 2001 that "there cannot be a strong democratic state in the context of a weak society (Weigle 2002)." Moreover, the regimes have continued to support civic activism despite the colored revolutions in Eurasia during the 2000s, the Arab Spring of 2010, and the mass demonstrations in Moscow during 2011–2012. Even in Russia, where authorities have launched a major campaign to intimidate nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that receive assistance from abroad, the Kremlin has recently increased government funding to support "socially-oriented noncommercial organizations" in Russia's regions.

It would be easy to dismiss such rhetoric as mere window dressing to mollify domestic and international audiences. In both countries, the effort to promote civil society has yielded networks of government-organized nongovernmental organizations (GONGOs) with close ties to state officials and dependent on state funding. Both regimes, too, have repeatedly suppressed independent voices that challenge the regime. Yet such a view oversimplifies what is really going on. It ignores the many organizations in both China and Russia that have been created without prompting from government officials and operate autonomously from government agencies, even if they do not openly challenge state policies. More importantly, denying the authenticity of such independent activity forestalls productive exploration of what civil society is and how it operates across space and time.

This article takes seriously the authoritarian embrace of civil society and uses it to explore three sets of questions. First, we ask how we can usefully apply the concept of "civil society" in different historical contexts. Second, we consider why the ruling elites in these two countries would encourage civic activism, despite the risk to their authority, and what they have done to contain this risk. Finally, we investigate how different institutional and discursive legacies have shaped the distinctive patterns of social organization in the two countries.

Defining civil society is notoriously difficult. Most scholars and practitioners describe civil society as an interactive, public space between the state and the household, where people can organize themselves to pursue their own interests. When applied to concrete cases, though, the meaning of the term varies widely. It varies, in part, because the boundaries between state and society, and between the public and private sectors, are not uniform; rather, they are historically determined (Ehrenberg 1999). However, it also varies depending on who is using the term and for what purpose (Ehrenberg 1999; Seligman 1992). The disparate progressive movements who praised civil society in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, looked to civil society as a space where marginalized voices could be heard (Cohen and Arato 1994). By the late 1980s, advocates of neoliberal economic reform also took up the banner of civil society (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Walters 2002). Rather than a messy space of contending political interests, though, they saw civil society as an apolitical "third sector" that would work with government and market actors to improve governance (Howell and Pearce 2001). Finally, more critical theorists, often inspired by Antonio Gramsci, note that civil society can contain the public sphere as much as expand it, reinforcing popular judgments that some voices have more intrinsic value than others. Civil society may empower individuals by lending them resources to pursue interests, but it can also help to consolidate the authority of those groups with the resources to organize effectively (Gal 1997; Edwards and Foley 1997).

In this article, we recognize the potential links between civil society and democracy, but do not insist upon them, nor do we argue that civic associations in these two countries meet some universal expectations of civil society. Most do not. We instead ask what the authoritarian efforts to promote civil society tell us about governance in these two geopolitical giants. Here, we proceed from the more consensual notion that civil society facilitates efficiency and stability in a market economy. Moreover, rather than define civil society as

somehow separate from the state, we regard both civic organizations and government agencies as interconnected, mutually constituting elements of a single governance regime. Civil society, in this view, does not simply inhabit a space between the state and the household but helps to articulate and reinforce the boundaries between state and society that distinguish market liberalism from other socioeconomic systems (Mitchell 1991; Bartelson 2006).[1]

However, if civil society marks a liberal society, why should the regimes in China and Russia want to encourage it? We argue that political elites in both countries recognize that an administered society cannot compete in the context of globalizing markets, rapid technological innovation, and increased communication. As state bureaucracies recede to make way for market forces, the leadership in both countries look to civic organizations to provide more flexible and efficient governance. By monitoring local agencies and enforcing official government policies, civic participation can actually strengthen state capacity and improve government effectiveness. Furthermore, given the significance of civil society as a marker for membership in the international community, a state that can demonstrate its willingness and ability to work alongside a relatively robust civil society is usually more legitimate in the eyes of its citizens, as well as in the eyes of other states. At the same time, the leadership in both regimes recognize that autonomous social groups can provide a base for independent, even oppositional, collective action, and so both rely on a menu of regulation, financial control, surveillance, and repression to carefully contain and channel new social forces.

By highlighting the selective use of liberalism to prop up otherwise authoritarian regimes, our study contributes to the growing literature on hybrid regimes and "competitive authoritarianism" (Brownlee 2007; Levitsky and Way 2010; Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Most of this literature focuses on regimes, such as Russia, that periodically submit themselves to competitive (if highly orchestrated) elections at the national level. Examining authoritarian efforts to promote civic activism not only expands the potential application of this literature to new regimes, such as China, but also directs attention to some of the broader pressures pushing regimes towards limited, managed liberalization.

In this respect, China and Russia provide a productive base for comparison. As these regimes seek both to encourage and contain civic activism, both must contend with the legacies of Soviet-style socialism. In both countries, state agencies retain substantial control over access to social resources, and in neither case has the regime provided civic associations firm legal guarantees supporting an autonomous public sphere. In both cases, civic life is dominated by GONGOs while more autonomous organizations are relegated to the nooks and crannies of public life (Henry 2010; Spires 2011a). However, there are differences as well. The Russian regime, even after recent acts of suppression, continues to tolerate more open, organized dissent than does the regime in China, but, paradoxically, it is in China where civic activism at the grassroots is growing more rapidly. Indeed, whereas the Kremlin has recently taken steps to constrain the room for civic activism even further, government agencies in China, at least in some regions, have moved in small ways to make life easier for civic organizations, including those organizations with foreign funding.

Our third question seeks to explain these differences. One approach would be to place them in the context of these regimes' broader responses to the opportunities and demands of a more globalized economy. Harley Balzer, for example, argues that China's embrace of global economic trends has "fostered regional, sectoral and institutional interests that defended and expanded the policies of reform and openness (Balzer 2008, p. 38)." This

[1] In this article, we distinguish between civil society, which refers to the complex of social organizations inhabiting the public sphere, and the public sphere. Following Habermas (1991).

increased diversity has also improved Chinese social organizations' access to resources that are not controlled by the state. Russia's more wary response to globalization, in contrast, has created few interests to "contest renewed administrative domination of the economy."

This article does not challenge these arguments so much as suggest, in a preliminary fashion, deeper forces at work. In particular, it argues that these regimes' strategies towards social organizations (and reform more generally) reflect different sets of deeply embedded institutionalized accounts about the role of state and society in these two countries. While such historical legacies cannot be said to have "caused" differences in patterns of civic organization, they provide the symbols and institutional mechanisms that render some strategies less costly, and therefore more likely, than others. In China, the mechanisms regulating civic organizations reflect a traditional discourse that sees state and society as overlapping spheres in the search for order, stability and prosperity. They rely upon a combination of formal and informal relations that enable limited, indirect rule at the local level. In Russia, by contrast, the Putin/Medvedev regime has adopted a discourse that sees the state as an entity separate from society and ruling over it. This discourse depicts a fragmented society, separate from the state that must be controlled by the state to prevent anarchy. Consequently, the regime has pursued measures that leave little room for indirect governance by nonstate actors.

What does Civil Society do?

Bartelson (2006) notes that the term civil society first became widely used during the transition from absolutism to liberalism in early modern Europe. As absolutist regimes began to penetrate more deeply into society to consolidate their rule, they relied chiefly upon the direct intervention of a bureaucratic state to ensure social order. Liberal doctrine, by contrast, posited the existence of self-regulating mechanisms—namely civil society and economic markets—that aligned the pursuit of private interest with the interest of society as a whole. These mechanisms enabled the state to step back from the active regulation of daily life and simply ensure that social and economic exchange proceeds as smoothly as possible (Gordon 1991).

Contrary to liberal doctrine, however, neither the market nor civil society exists in a state of nature prior to the state; both require an elaborate institutional infrastructure coordinated by the state to function properly (Bartelson 2006; Mitchell 1991). Even in the USA, civic organizations such as churches, advocacy groups, and charities, for example, derive their identity in large part from state regulations that define who they are, what they are allowed to do, and what is forbidden to them. These regulations do not only empower individuals with legal rights and status but also create the frames within which certain types of organizational structures and activities become easier and others more difficult. Civil society acts most effectively as an aid to governance when such frames recede into the background, and these organizations, their interests and activities, are perceived as the more or less spontaneous efforts of private individuals, existing both separate from and prior to governmental regulation.

Civil society organizations therefore do not simply inhabit a public space between the household and the state; they help construct and shape it (Much of the following argument derived from Bartelson 2006). They specifically draw three sets of boundaries that demarcate the public sphere. First, as civil society organizations make demands upon the state, they enact, and therefore reinforce, the distinction between those expressions and behaviors designated as part of "society" (reflecting the interests of particular individuals or groups) and those expressions and behaviors designated as part of the state (acting as an impersonal

arbiter of competing interests in an authoritative pursuit of the common good). Second, the operation of civil society organizations helps demarcate the boundary between those issues that can be contested in the public sphere from those that belong outside politics, either because they belong to the private sphere where citizens may act without direct state intervention, or because they are considered part of a natural order that is pointless to debate in public.

Finally, the sanctioned public operation of civic organizations helps to demarcate a public sphere that is "civil" and legitimate from a more dangerous or "uncivil" society that is not. Here, one finds two axes of distinction: first, between the civility of domestic society and the anarchic state of nature found in the international environment, and second, between the behaviors, and the people who perform them, that warrant the protection of the state, and those who do not. In many cases, these two axes of distinction are conflated, such that unacceptable behaviors become associated with outside influence. In either case, marking the boundaries of "civil society" serves two functions. First, it induces organizations to channel their own demands within acceptable institutional boundaries and to monitor and socialize other civic actors to do likewise. Second, identifying dangerous "uncivil elements" outside the public sphere highlights the necessity of the "state" as protector of "society."

These boundaries have enormous political significance and so are constantly negotiated and contested. Hybrid regimes face particular challenges when negotiating the boundaries of civil society. If the regime constructs the boundaries of the public sphere too broadly, civic organizations may gain the room and resources to push these boundaries even further. However, a regime that draws the boundaries too narrowly severs the connection between individual goals and state interests that makes civil society so important. Citizens unable to pursue their particular interests in the public sphere will do so privately, perhaps covertly. Meanwhile, the exercise of power becomes starkly apparent, and whatever public participation does exist is perceived as orchestrated by the state. In such a case, people will withdraw voluntary participation and the government will again have to resort to cumbersome and inefficient bureaucracies to administer the economy.

Organizing Civil Society in China and Russia

In the case of Russia and China, the leadership had to strike a balance between eliciting and containing civic activism within a context shaped by the legacy of Soviet-style socialism. The revolutionary regimes in these two countries rejected all notions of a "state of nature" or self-regulating mechanisms that would sustain the status quo. Official ideology made no distinction between state and society, public and private. All was to be subordinated to the communist party's transformational mission. Both regimes replaced the market with an administrative-command economy, banned all autonomous social organizations in favor of mass organizations that would mobilize the populace behind regime policies, and indeed, endeavored to penetrate and mediate all public social interaction under the guise of the Communist Party's "Leading Role."

These efforts to swallow society proved only partially successful, however. The vast, rapidly changing societies of China and the Soviet Union simply had too many moving parts to be administered by a central apparatus. So while the party dominated the public sphere, both regimes increasingly relied on the work of private networks—known as *blat* in the Soviet Union (Ledeneva 1998, 2008) and *guanxi* in China (Yang 1994)—as a kind of ersatz public sphere where an elaborate system of norms and practices governed the allocation of scarce resources, provided a "safety net" against the often arbitrary impact of state policies, monitored each other's behavior, and even resolved social conflicts, all outside the public eye.

As Ledeneva (2008) argues, however, this reliance on informal networks also undercut the capacity and legitimacy of the state. Informal networks restricted vertical and horizontal flows of information to narrow, often hidden pathways and surreptitiously diverted public resources towards private ends, contradicting socialist propaganda and ultimately undermining the state's claim to be an impersonal arbiter over society (Volkov 1997). This problem became particularly acute once the regime's transformational mission gave way to the more prosaic task of governance. Without the imperative to work towards a radiant future, officials (and others) increasingly captured public offices for private use (Jowitt 1983).

Beginning in the late 1970s, the discrepancy between both regimes' global aspirations and economic trajectories became increasingly clear. By the mid-1980s, in both countries, the death of a leader opened the door to economic reform, even if the paths they chose were fundamentally different. By the time the new millennium dawned, leadership in both countries had long since recognized that administered society can no longer compete in a globalizing economy. Both wanted to harness the resources and ideas provided by global markets to maintain their status as great powers, and both looked to civic associations to extend the state even as the bureaucracy receded. For this reason, both regimes frame their efforts to promote civil society within the context of "modernization." In Russia, President Putin declared as recently as June 2012 that "we are fully aware that you cannot build a modern economy without a mature civil society (Putin 2012)." In China, the Central Party School promotes the "positive functions" of social organizations to create a "modern civil society" by 2020 (Zhou and Wang 2008).

What ties civil society to "modernization?" First, as China and Russia relinquished state control over production, both regimes experienced rising demand for information and coordination. They also turned to social groups to fill in the gaps produced by plant shutdowns and reduced social spending. When economic liberalization accelerated in China in the 1990s, the CCP ramped up efforts to recruit nongovernmental groups to assist in delivering social services (Ma 2007; Howell 2004). In Russia, too, Putin declared that social organizations had become "genuinely indispensable partners for the state" in the delivery of services for "AIDS prevention, drug addiction, homeless children, the social rehabilitation of disabled people, and developing local self-government (Putin 2005)."

Second, social organizations provide channels of communication that enhance the stability and efficiency of state controls. Officials in both Russia and China want to hear about citizen complaints and frustrations before they boil over in social unrest.[2] Likewise, both regimes view civil society as a means to strengthen the capacity of the central government; for example, central government leaders combating corruption have relied on social organizations to monitor the behavior of local officials and enterprises. In China, NGOs operating in villages, townships, and provinces frequently report to Beijing on malfeasance at the local level. Similarly, the local and regional "social councils" that have emerged in Russia since 2005 have been tasked with monitoring local governments and enterprises to ensure their compliance with federal regulations (Richter 2009b).

One of the more interesting aspects of these regimes' policies promoting social activism is that they are often modeled closely to the nongovernmental sector elsewhere in the world

[2] Of course, neither regime relied solely, or even primarily, on social organizations to hear complaints from the citizenry. In both countries, citizens more often communicated complaints and frustrations individually through appeals and complaints made directly to government officials and the media. Finally, in both countries one finds a significant amount of local protest activity outside the accepted institutional boundaries. For the most part, these protests target local officials for mostly local issues, including the confiscation of housing for purposes of development, environmental degradation, and local economic issues of various kinds (for China, Shi 1997; Chen 2012; for Russia, Robertson 2011).

(Hemment 2009; Spires 2012). This suggests the regimes are responding not only to the exigencies of domestic reform but also to pressures and opportunities originating in the international environment. Since the early 1990s, as the institutions of global governance embraced neoliberal ideas of expanding global markets, civil society and civic activism have been identified within global political and financial institutions as important indicators of good governance. NGOs have increasingly gained access and influence in global institutions and conferences, and the largest bilateral and multilateral institutions of international development also have increasingly favored NGOs over state bureaucracies, or at least required that successful projects include some level of NGO participation (Gordenker and Weiss 1996; Edwards and Hulme 1996). Given that global power and influence is increasingly expressed today through international institutions, promoting social organizations gives these regimes representation at international forums where NGOs are active, as well as signals the two regimes' general willingness to comply with international norms and become responsible members of the international community. On a more practical level, NGOs that adhere to global norms on organizational structure and practice are far more likely to receive foreign assistance than others (Spires 2011b).

Adopting international models for social organizations not only confers external legitimacy but also bolsters legitimacy within the domestic population, particularly among urban elites, because it gives them the opportunity to be part of an increasingly globalized community. It is interesting, for example, that participation in the NGO forum at the 1995 Fourth UN Conference for Women in Beijing acted as a huge inspiration and catalyst not only for NGOs operating in China but also for the nascent women's movement in Russia as well (in China, Deng 2010, p. 184; in Russia, see Sperling 1999).

If both regimes encourage greater civic activism from their population, however, they also deploy many of the same tools to draw boundaries. Both regimes continued to describe the polity as a collective entity rather than as a collection of individuals. Though individuals are expected to work hard to improve their personal well-being, ultimately the interest of the individual hinges upon the success of the entire nation, as manifested in the strength of the state. Organizations that serve the state, by delivering social services, providing information and expertise to government agencies, mobilizing groups behind state policies, or even criticizing individual government offices, receive official encouragement and support. Conversely, organizations that criticize the state are designated as “uncivil society,” and placed beyond the pale of acceptable public speech.

For the most part, the regimes have not resorted to overt repression to maintain the boundary between civil and uncivil society. They instead apply selective incentives and disincentives that make it easier and more effective for social organizations to work within the lines. First, Moscow and Beijing created organizational networks with close links to state agencies, supplementing the mass organizations previously associated with state socialism, such as trade unions and women's groups, with organizations constructed according to more Western models, such as professional organizations, research institutes, charitable organizations, and others. More autonomous organizations, meanwhile, are required to follow a rigorous registration process to attain formal legal status. This process, observers in both countries argue, has weeded out inactive and fraudulent organizations (Ma 2007; Javeline and Lindemann-Komarova 2010), but it also enabled local and national authorities to deny formal status to organizations they did not like.

In addition, both regimes have used their control over revenue streams to patrol the boundaries of the public sphere. Civic organizations in both countries depend heavily on material support from local, regional, and central government agencies. In recent years, both countries have seen significant growth in corporate giving, but in both cases, the government

has played a key role in mobilizing these funds and directing them towards preferred organizations and priorities. Independent philanthropy remains generally underdeveloped, partly because tax laws do not encourage it. In China, Carolyn Hsu notes, organizational leaders "insisted that cultivating good relationships with state agencies was the key strategy for securing organizational resources because of the state's capacity to permit or constrain access to even non-state resources" (Hsu 2010, p. 267).

After the government, foreign donors—from foundations to private individuals—provide the most assistance. Both regimes regard this support with suspicion, particularly after the Eurasian color revolutions and the Arab Spring: foreigners can lend legitimacy to a regime's democratic pretensions, introduce innovative techniques and practices, and offset the necessity for state funding, but they also may pursue agendas contrary to the state's interests. Interestingly, the trajectory of policy towards outside funding tends to be moving in opposite directions in the two countries. Though Chinese regulations have generally presented the higher barrier to entry for international donors, in more recent years Beijing has experimented with policies easing that position (China Development Brief 2012). In Russia, as described below, the Kremlin has made life very difficult for outside donors.

Finally, both regimes have proven quite ready to use more overt control. Neither country has the legal infrastructure that would protect social organizations from official harassment or suppression. Russian and Chinese authorities are virtually free to shut down any organization they choose, using everything from tax audits and police raids to expulsions and arrests. Moreover, such measures are usually used quite selectively, even arbitrarily, so that the actual boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behavior is never quite clear (for Russia, see Balzer 2003; for China, Stern and O'Brien 2012).

These mechanisms show that, despite their rhetoric, neither regime has been willing to construct a clear legal separation between state and society. The absence of such a clear line militates against a strong civic presence in either country. In addition to the constant, looming presence of interfering governmental agencies, much of the population still looks to the state to provide essential social services (Hsu 2010). Indeed, surveys in both countries have put the percentage of the population working in the voluntary sector well below the global average (for Russia, see Public Chamber of the Russian Federation 2010; for China, see Chen 2009, p. 71).

Unfortunately, the dearth of reliable data makes it difficult to assess precisely the state of civil society in these countries. In Russia, the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation (2013, p. 16) reported that over 402,000 social organizations had registered in the Ministry of Justice in December, 2012. These numbers are probably inflated. They include many organizations usually not counted in assessments of civic associations, including religious organizations, political parties and dacha associations. In addition, the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation (2013) estimates only about 40 % of the registered organizations are active (reference). In China, by contrast, the Ministry of Civic Affairs (2013) reports 492,000 organizations registered in 2012, but some experts believe this number represents only a fraction of the country's active civic organizations. In particular, the official tally does not include organizations that have registered as commercial enterprises and many others that work illegally without registering at all.[3]

Even without reliable quantitative data, however, one still can compare and contrast broad patterns of civic organization. In both countries, the sector remains dominated by the

[3] Estimating the number of unregistered, grassroots NGOs in China has become a terribly contentious exercise. Chen (2009: 69) speculates that there are as many as 11 million, but Spires et al. (2014) scoff at this estimate, saying it probably includes dancing clubs and other such groups. They believe the number could be as low as 2,000.

mass organizations left over from the periods before the economic reform as well as other organizations with close official ties, while more autonomous organizations have much less room for maneuver. Spires (2011a, p. 10) describes autonomous organizations working the interstices among different government agencies, limited to those places where "where the government is absent, impotent, or unwilling to act." Except for those few organizations with reliable outside assistance, most of these more autonomous groups tend to be small, local and institutionally weak. They often depend heavily on the enthusiasm, acumen and personal connections of their leaders, and usually do not survive when these leaders change (for China, see Watson 2008; for Russia, Sundstrom and Henry 2006). Finally, in both countries the lack of a consistent legal environment has resulted in enormous regional variations in the number, strength and interests of civic organizations, depending on economic conditions, the attitudes of local authorities, and the personalities of individual activists.

Yet despite these broad similarities, the patterns of organization in the two countries also exhibit significant differences. In Russia, despite recent crackdowns, individuals and organizations critical of Putin's presidency, such as *Memorial*, continue to operate openly, with affiliates and members across the country. Though these organizations have been subject to constant official harassment, including numerous tax audits, office inspections, detainments, and even an occasional beating, they retain their legal standing. In China, such open, organized dissent, particularly if it spanned across several provinces, would not be tolerated. The regime cracked down upon the Falun Gong in the late-1990s not merely because it challenged the state but also because it was able to inspire passionate support, and thus represented an alternative order.

But even though Russia has allowed more room for open dissent, there is less space for grassroots social activism within the boundaries set by government than appears to be the case in China. In Russia, the public sphere is still regarded by many as a realm dominated by the state or other elites, while society continues to be relegated to the private realm of networks of family and friends. As late as 2008, for example, a study by the respected survey firm, the Levada Center, concluded that "in the space between the government and the authorities as a source of benefits, on the one side, and the small circle of friends and relatives, on the other, for the common Russian there was absolutely nothing—a social vacuum." (Gudkov et al. 2008, p. 76) As a result, most Russians remain reluctant to enter a public sphere in which they expect to have little influence, and indeed often actively avoid the public sphere as an arena of cynicism and corruption. Putin's efforts to promote civic activism from above, meanwhile, has only reinforced public perceptions that they are appendages of the state rather than spontaneous expressions of popular interest.

In China, by contrast, prevailing practices recognize a space where state and society overlap and negotiation is possible. Civil society there tends to be organized in vertically-integrated pyramidal structures, resembling models of state corporatism, with a few "all-China" or paratstatal organizations at the top, GONGOs at the next level, and many unregistered groups at the bottom. The base of the pyramid seems to be expanding most rapidly. Although these organizations operate without official approval, they are still "embedded" within established structures through a variety of formal and informal linkages that offer limited protection (Hildebrandt 2011). As in Russia, government agents and local activists often regard each other warily at times, and the authorities clearly have the upper hand, but the blurred boundaries between state and society also create more space where both groups can negotiate to pursue their own interests.

These differences in the relations between the state and civic organizations in these two countries become apparent when comparing Chinese and Russian responses to three recent natural disasters: the Sichuan earthquake in May, 2008, the wildfires outside Moscow in the

summer of 2010, and the floods in the southern Russian region of Krymsk in April, 2012. In each of these disasters, thousands of citizens volunteered to help with the relief efforts. In both countries, most of the volunteers were not affiliated with any formal organization. In China, however, representatives of up to 200 civic organizations also joined. Government-sponsored groups, such as China Red Cross and the Communist Youth League, led the charge, but many grassroots organizations followed. Although the result was sometimes chaotic, volunteers worked with both local governments and with larger official organizations to coordinate their activities. After several weeks, government agencies stepped in to regain control, requiring organizations to have permission to work in the disaster area and suppressing some organizations that criticized the government for shoddy construction work on schools that resulted in the death of children. Still, most observers agree the earthquake response strengthened NGO networks and even led to new rules loosening the regulations for autonomous foundations to raise money (Teets 2009; Shieh and Deng 2011).

In Russia, by contrast, the organizational presence was much less pronounced. Though some groups did emerge to help transport volunteers to the disaster zone and coordinate their efforts, there was nothing like the mobilization of grassroots NGOs or the networking between civic organizations and government agencies that occurred in China (Public Chamber of the Russian Federation 2010). Like their Chinese counterparts, Russian authorities later took steps to regulate such voluntarism. But instead of negotiating with relevant organizations, the Public Chamber introduced a new law in the Duma that would create a new federal office to "promote" voluntarism as well as encourage prospective volunteers to enroll in a national registry (Winning 2013). Needless to say, this proposal was heavily criticized by volunteer organizations, and likely will be amended significantly before final passage. Still, the governmental response illustrates that Russian authorities continue to distrust spontaneous action in the public sphere.

Historical Legacies and State-Society Relations

The second half of this article explores some of the reasons for these differences in deeply embedded discursive traditions about state and society in these two countries and the institutional legacies that lend such traditions continued resonance. We do not claim these legacies are the primary cause of such different patterns. Rather, we argue that they create a context for contemporary politics that make different trajectories more or less likely. In particular, we argue that such remnants of the past provide contemporary leadership with the discursive symbols, meanings and logic, as well as the institutional structures and mechanisms, that render some decisions easier to make, to justify, and to implement than others, while rendering others impractical or even unthinkable.

It is noteworthy, for example, that since the 2000s, at least, leaders in both countries have drawn upon pre-socialist narratives of state and society when articulating and justifying their governance strategies. President Putin has consistently evoked traditional Russian notions of *gosudarstvennost'* since he first stepped into the Presidency in 2000 (Squier 2002). The term *gosudarstvennost'*, derived from the terms *gosudar'*, (meaning "prince" or "lord") and gosudarstvo (meaning the "state"), refers to a particular type of internal sovereignty (A concise genealogy of state and society in Russia is found in Kharkhordin 2001). It envisions the state as an entity separate from society, aloof from the push and pull of ordinary politics, that must guide society from above in the interests of the whole. As a corollary to this narrative, Russian society is often depicted as a fragmented and unruly polity that requires a strong hand lest it devolve into anarchy.

In China, too, the regime relies upon traditional narratives that call for a strong state as a guarantor against anarchy. Rather than depicting state simply as directing society from above, however, former President Hu Jintao drew upon Confucianist notions of a "harmonious society" in which state and society are bound by mutual rights and obligations: individuals had a moral duty to conduct themselves in accordance with their designated role in society, while the state was obliged to provide the conditions enabling them to prosper in these roles.

Deploying such traditional discourses evokes feelings of continuity and stability that help to legitimate governance strategies as both appropriate and necessary, but such appeals would hold little power if they did not in some way reflect the formal and informal practices of contemporary institutions. In the next two sections of this article, then, we examine how echoes of these traditional discourses could be found in their respective countries even under the communist era before the reforms of the 1980s, and subsequently transmitted to the present day. Thus, even though Mao attempted to emulate Soviet institutions as closely as possible in the early 1950s, one finds subtle but significant differences in the way the two regimes interpreted the Party's "Leading Role" and its transformative mission. In the Soviet Union, the regime relied somewhat more heavily on bureaucratic surveillance, command and control of a distrusted population than was the case in China, where history, ideology and practical considerations contributed to a governance strategy that, while still highly centralized, relied more on a combination of direct and indirect governance to ensure compliance.

These differences in socialist practice then produced differences in the way formal institutions interacted with informal networks, reinforcing the traditional accounts of state and society in the experience of daily life. In the Soviet Union, the informal networks, even when recognized as both necessary and widespread, were seen as maneuvering around or even in contradiction to the formal operations of state institutions, such that most interpreted the formal public sphere as separate and distinct from the realm of private, informal practices. In China, by contrast, formal and informal practices complemented each other in carrying out the dictates of the party, constructing a lived experience where the private and public realms overlapped. These patterns then had significant implications for the organization of civic activism during the reform era.

RUSSIA

The Soviet regime, despite its claims to represent the working class, did not do away with *gosudarstvennost'* so much as articulate it differently. A key argument in Lenin's *What is to be Done?*, after all, contended that the working class would not spontaneously come up with a coherent revolutionary program and therefore had to be led by a small group of professional revolutionaries. The argument that the people had to be led towards reform and revolution was hardly unique to Lenin in late Imperial Russia, however. Peter Holquist argues that most of the reformers and revolutionaries of the era believed that

"the state was necessary because the autocracy had bequeathed so few institutions binding "society" and the common people together. Such institutions were essential for cultivating benighted subjects into rational, responsible citizens. In their absence, public activists turned to the state (Holquist 2002, p. 48)."

Lenin originally understood the Party's "Leading Role" as emphasizing persuasion over control, but the circumstances of the Bolsheviks' rise to power reinforced the impulse toward centralized command. As Anderson (2010) points out, the Bolshevik revolution consisted of an urban *coup d'etat* in which a relatively small group of revolutionaries, supported by a relatively small proportion of the population, seized control of the central institutions of the

state and then fought to maintain that control in the face of a multitude of internal and external enemies. Stalin later built upon this war ethos to launch a "revolution from above" that sought to expunge all vestiges of traditional Russian society as backward, antithetical and potentially dangerous, while at the same time, paradoxically, creating a vast bureaucratic state that shared many characteristics with its paternalist, imperial predecessor (Fitzpatrick 1999, pp. 14–15).

Again, the efforts to subordinate society to the Party's revolutionary ambitions were never completely successful. The end of state terror after Stalin's death, in particular, tacitly recognized a sphere where individuals could expect to be left alone, provided they did not openly question the party's position. This implicit private sphere allowed private networks to flourish and even some informal associations to appear among co-workers, friends and families. In public, though, the population still had to adhere to the rituals of party rule: "Regardless of where or for which goals these pockets of self-organization arose, if they openly strove for uncompromising autonomy, the result would be a conflict with the authorities. The decaying authorities could accept the factual violation of their monopoly but only when they masked themselves" (Jakobson and Sanovich 2009, p. 23).

These forced rituals created a perceived distinction between public and private that came to organize much of Soviet life: the public sphere was the realm of the party-state, a performative space where people rehearsed ideological platitudes, while the authentic expression of needs and interests took place outside the public eye within the constricted space of personal networks of friends and relatives (Gal and Kligman 2000). [4] In this way, the informal practices so vital to the working of the regime were generally constructed as separate from the formal operations of the state, even a form of tacit resistance.

This construction of public and private as oppositional realms proved particularly subversive to state strength. Rather than aligning the individual pursuit of interests with behaviors that strengthen governance, the perception that public and private constituted separate moral universes made it possible, even expected, for members of these networks to divert public resources for their own parochial purposes. And because these networks, if left to their own devices, would pursue their own interests with little reference to the common good, the state had to rely on direct administrative surveillance and control to maintain order. Indeed, when the Communist Party abdicated its leading role in the early 1990s, the offices and functions of the state became captured by private networks, setting off a centrifugal dynamic that made it impossible to govern effectively. The perceived descent into anarchy again reinforced the traditional narrative that a strong state was needed to rein in an unruly population.

The resulting social environment was not auspicious for civic participation. Though the Yeltsin administration officially welcomed the rise of independent social organizations and placed relatively few constraints on public association and expression, the actual policy was one of indifference and neglect (Jakobson and Sanovich 2009). The new regime did very little to provide a solid legal basis for the new organizations, and there was very little incentive for ordinary people to become active. The fragmentation of state authority and resources among private networks provided few public channels through which to make effective demands, and the corruption and sense of powerlessness reinforced popular perceptions that the public sphere was a realm where only criminals prospered.

[4] Yurchak (2005) takes issue with the common claim that the public and private in Soviet society represented two distinct moral realms, noting that the people he studies, mostly elite members of the last generation who came of age before *perestroika,* accepted many of the values expressed in the ideology. Even Yurchak, however, distinguishes between the performative elements of public party rituals and the more substantive ("Constative") content of speech outside the public realm.

In this cramped public space, civic activism clustered closely around sources of support (Henry 2010). The largest organizations were the heirs to party-led mass organizations of the Soviet era (such as trade unions, the Union of Russian Women or the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Nature) as well as a number of charitable groups, including groups for veterans, for pensioners and for the disabled, that catered to groups previously protected by Soviet social services. These organizations relied heavily on government connections for economic support and, more often than not, were used to mobilize support behind local politicians and their policies. A second network of social organizations consisted of smaller and more professional advocacy organizations funded largely with foreign assistance. These organizations were populated mostly by members of the intelligentsia under the Soviet regime and advocated policies that would align Russia more closely with the global community. Finally, there was a third group consisting of small, local organizations that had little access to resources of any kind, and worked on local issues with little interaction with organizations in either of the other two groups.

Putin came to power in 2000 vowing to restore the strength of the state and, in accordance with the *gosudarstvennost'* tradition, envisioned a public sphere that served state interests rather than vice-versa. His conception of governance was expressed most clearly in the notion of "sovereign democracy" as articulated by former Kremlin political adviser, Vladislav Surkov. Though "sovereign democracy" persists in claiming Russia's democratic status, it also maintains that such democratic ideals should be adapted to the unique attributes of Russia's history and culture. Surkov particularly emphasized the supposedly collective nature of Russian national identity: the individual citizen is most free, he argued, when the nation as a whole is strong. (Surkov 2006) He also rehearsed the narrative about society's inability to govern itself: "strong personalities often compensate for the collective's ineffectiveness, the lack of mutual trust and self-organization (Surkov 2005)."

In accordance with this vision, the Kremlin took several measures to strengthen those social organizations aligned with state interests while squeezing the available space for autonomous groups. First, the administration increased nationalist rhetoric to accentuate the boundaries between Russia and the rest of the world. Such rhetoric included both triumphalist claims that Russia has reasserted its status as a great power on the world stage, as well as a heightened sense of threat, targeted particularly at the USA. The triumphalist rhetoric lends credibility to sovereign democracy's claim that the individual's path to freedom, security and dignity leads through the success of the nation as a whole. The rhetoric of danger, by contrast, serves to dissuade Russian citizens, particularly in the elite, from looking outside approved venues for ideas and resources. In May 2004, for example, Putin explicity criticized organizations he believed were not "geared towards defending people's real interests": "For some of these organizations, the priority is rather different—obtaining funding from influential foreign or domestic foundations. For others it is servicing dubious groups and commercial interests (Putin 2004). "

Second, the administration began actively to create a network of new organizations aligned with the Kremlin that could act as substitutes for and displace the more autonomous groups (Henderson 2008; Jakobson and Sanovich 2009; Gudkov et al. 2008). The most notorious of these groups were the nationalist youth groups such as *Nashi* and *Molodaya Gvardiya*. Other groups, such as think tanks, environmental groups and other advocacy organizations, adopted many of the forms and procedures associated with professional NGOs in the West, but clearly aligned with the Kremlin's goals. In one example, the League of the Health of the Nation, a medical service organization that included several members of the Public Chamber on its board of directors, had a mission statement that echoed in starkest terms the fear that Russia would devolve into chaos without a strong state:

> "In the contemporary world of geopolitical competition between countries, victory belongs to the strongest. If we do not strengthen the physical and spiritual-moral health of our citizens, and with that our economic might and defense capabilities, the population of the country will become a 'nomadic tribe', …(League of Health of Nations 2008)."

Finally, after 2005 the Kremlin acted more aggressively to control the resources available to social organizations. First, beginning in 2006 the Presidential administration has sponsored a grant competition distributing annually between 0.5 billion (2006) and 1.5 billion rubles (2012) to social organizations around the country. In 2010, the Medvedev Presidency launched a new program to support "socially-oriented non-commercial organizations," which included subsidizing regional governments to have grant competitions of their own, as well as to help fund the training of local activists.

Starting in 2005 the Putin administration also undertook a number of regulatory initiatives designed to make it harder for NGOs to accept foreign donations, and easier for authorities to close down organizations they do not like. The centerpiece of this legislative effort was the NGO law passed in January 2006. Under this law, the Ministry of Justice retains the right to deny registration to any organization with "goals and objectives" that "create a threat to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity, unique character, cultural heritage and national interests of the Russian Federation" (Wood 2006).

All of these elements of Putin's rule became accentuated when he returned to the Presidency in May 2012 after the mass demonstrations in Moscow that winter. He amplified the nationalist rhetoric of his first tour in office and particularly sharpened his critique of the USA. He also dramatically escalated his attack on foreign assistance to Russian NGOs. In September, 2012, the Russian government abruptly barred USAID, the largest single foreign donor to NGOs in Russia, from funding any new projects in Russia (Tumanov 2013). The regulatory environment also became more hostile: in June 2012, the Duma passed a law that required all organizations that accepted foreign donations to pay for "political activities" to re-register as a "foreign agent" and in November, a new law redefined treason to include those individuals or organizations who provide "consultative assistance" to a foreign organization deemed to be engaged in "activities aimed against the security of the Russian federation (Rozhdestvenskaia et al. 2013)." Then, beginning in early March, 2013, local prosecutors, sanitation officers and other officials "inspected" the offices of hundreds of NGOs across the country looking for evidence of foreign influence; in May many of these organizations received warnings that they must register as foreign agents or pay crippling financial penalties.

Though this attack on foreign-funded represented the most significant frontal attack on civil society in either country during the past two decades, still it did not amount to a general assault on all civic associations. On the contrary, Russian authorities announced in late January that it would increase government funding to socially-oriented organizations to 3 billion rubles (Tumanov 2013). The President has also looked to the Russian Orthodox Church to play a greater role in organizing Russian society: the Church, he told a meeting of Orthodox bishops in February, 2013, should "get every opportunity to fully serve in such important fields as the support of family and motherhood, the upbringing and education of children, youth, social development, and to strengthen the patriotic spirit of the armed forces (Naughton 2013)."[5]

[5] To the authors' knowledge, the Russian government has not appreciably increased its subsidies to Orthodox charities in the last year, though it may have encouraged more donations from private donors. Also, it is noteworthy that, even thought the law on foreign agents explicitly excluded religious charities from its jurisdiction, many religious organizations were in fact inspect *except* those affiliated with the Orthodox Church, even though much of their funding comes from diaspora communities abroad(Achmatova 2013).

Perhaps most emblematic of Putin's vision of civil society since the late 2000s has been the creation of consultative bodies such as the Presidential Council on Civil Society and Human Rights and particularly Public Chamber of the Russian Federation (PCRF) in 2005 (Richter 2009a; Evans 2008). Described as a platform for ongoing dialogue between state and society, the rules and procedures of the latter body projects an ideal image of "civil society" as a unified, apolitical space that assists state agencies in governing more effectively. The Chamber's mandate is to promote civil society organizations, provide expert advice to executive and legislative bodies in the formation of policy, and to monitor government agencies to ensure effective implementation: it has no formal decision-making authority of its own. To ensure the body does not transgress the boundaries of acceptable public debate, its members are selected in a procedure dominated by the administration and, according to a law passed in 2007, cannot include anyone accused of "extremism." In keeping with the image of civil society as apolitical and unified, PCRF members are not allowed to create factions and seek unanimity as much as possible.

The Public Chamber has since become the paradigmatic institutional form mediating state and society in Russia. Similar bodies have been created in at least 65 of Russia's 87 federal regions, in addition to numerous cities and towns. Analogous "social councils" have been attached to important ministries at both the federal and regional level, including the interior and defense ministries (Richter 2009b). Rather than providing an arena for dialogue between state and society, however, most of these organizations, with a few notable exceptions, have come to resemble state bureaucracies. Without any formal decision-making or enforcement power of its own, the public chamber can influence policy only when allied with other, more powerful state agencies, particularly the local executive. It is noteworthy, for example, that, although a few members of the Public Chamber have spoken out forcefully against the attacks on foreign-funded NGOs, the response of the Public Chamber as an institution has been limited to surprisingly few protests against the prosecutors' actions and a few requests that the law be amended (Website of the Public Chamber, www.orpf.ru).

In sum, Putin's governance strategy reflected and rearticulated a traditional narrative positing a sharp distinction between a ruling state and a fractious society. This vision created a dynamic in which the state sought to dominate the public sphere to stave off centrifugal forces that could undermine state strength. Actors in the public sphere were expected to serve state interests and state goals or be accused of forming part of uncivil society. Though the Kremlin has succeeded in diminishing the ranks of formal, autonomous organizations that diverged from official policies, it has been less successful in fostering civic participation that authentically represents the needs of society. The organizations that do constitute formal civil society, therefore, are still seen by many as appendages of the state rather than as vehicles through which one can make effective demands on political authorities.

CHINA

In China, moreso than in the Soviet Union, the communist revolution heralded a historic break from traditional patterns of governance. According to Li (1991, p. 44), traditional governance in China consisted of two polarized structures: a highly centralized state bureaucracy, on the one hand, and a more dispersed structure of self-contained clans on the other, held together by a combination of direct and indirect controls, and legitimated with reference to Confucianist principles of obligation and reciprocity. The Maoist regime, on the other hand, explicitly rejected Confucianism and, like its Soviet counterpart, aspired to subordinate all aspects of Chinese public life under the Party's guidance in the name of socialist transformation. In the effort to recreate Soviet-style socialism in postwar China,

however, the new communist regime faced challenges and pursued solutions that echoed in certain respects the structures and practices of the past. These departures from the Soviet model helped to mitigate somewhat the discursive divide between state and society and even allowed areas where they overlapped.

Unlike the Bolsheviks, the Chinese communists did not take power after a quick *coup d'etat*, but only after a protracted struggle, primarily in the countryside. During this struggle, the Party leaders had to be far more cautious in dealing with local traditions and popular opinion than the Bolsheviks did prior to their revolution: "Contemporary China has grown out of the China of the past," Mao wrote, "we are Marxist in our historical approach and must not lop off our history. We should sum up our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-Sen and take over this valuable legacy…" (Perry 2012, p. 287). They also had to reconcile the ideological commitments to democratic centralism and the Party's "Leading Role" with the practical need to administer and control large chunks of territory without the administrative apparatus of a centralized state. As a practical matter, then, the CCP relied more heavily upon disciplined cadres in leadership positions in the countryside to "do some hard thinking and give full play to their own creativeness on the basis of the principles here set forth (Bray 2005, p. 58)." Even once the communists attained power, the new regime had not the capacity to administer the more rural, less wealthy, less skilled and much larger Chinese population with the same degree of direct control as was possible in the Soviet Union (Naughton 1995, pp. 38–46).

Reflecting the different mobilizational demands of China's revolutionary struggle, Mao supplemented the centralizing thrust of Marxism–Leninism ideology with an emphasis on the "mass line," which, in theory at least, called upon party cadres first to listen to the needs of the people and then translate these needs into action consistent with the Party's general line. Even though he assailed the "old ideas" of Confucianism as an impediment to building a modern socialist society, Mao was not above citing the ancient philosopher to make a point: "be a pupil before you become a teacher; learn from the cadre at the lower levels before you issue orders (Mao 1961, p. 378)." Indeed, whereas Stalin relied heavily upon the centralized organs of state security to conduct his purges of the party ranks in the1930s, Mao could, and did, enlist the masses in campaigns such as the Anti-Rightist Movement and the Cultural Revolution.

Equally important, the Maoist party-state relied less on direct administrative control than did the Soviet regime at the very local level and more on a combination of formal and informal pressures within what Shue (1994) has called a cellularized society. Urban communities were broken down into individual work units (*danwei*); rural communities were broken down into collectives or brigades. These social cells were mostly self-contained entities that organized nearly every aspect of people's lives. Not only did they control decisions over employment and wages, but they also provided their members with housing, education, health services and most other social services. According to Walder (1986, p. 121), the work units also devoted a great deal of time and energy attempting to "educate, resocialize, monitor and transform the thinking of the masses of the workers." Finally, the regime severely restricted worker mobility and other forms of horizontal linkages between the work units, such that most people's social networks and experience did not extend beyond the unit's boundaries. As Chen (2012, p. 15) writes, the *danwei* "fulfilled the function of surveillance, sanction and containment. Considering that work units featured long and dense interactions between ordinary people and state agents within a very limited space, surveillance and persuasion was usually prevalent and effective."

Not only did the cells effectively control and contain society, but they did so in a way that drew upon overlapping areas of formal and informal ties and associations, blurring the

boundaries of state and society. Because the planning mechanisms in China were less detailed than they were in the Soviet Union, the *danwei* had more formal autonomy over decisions of production and distribution than did the Soviet enterprises. As Shi (1997, p. 15) argues: "This arrangements shifts the pivotal point of decision making for low politics from the central government to grassroots organizations. As the decision-making center descends to the grassroots level, people's strategy for pursuing their interests changes fundamentally." This does not suggest that the center ceded authority to the work units so much as that it exercised its authority indirectly: decision-making in the work units were always dominated by members of the Party who knew well what was expected. In many cases, in fact, the combination of formal and informal mechanisms could be far more constraining, even repressive, than the use of formal mechanisms alone (Walder 1986).

Unlike the Soviet Union, then, the informal networks that emerged from these institutional networks were not perceived as separate from formal rules but part and parcel of the governing process, leading to a perception of a sphere overlapping state and society where the members of the *danwei* could pursue their own interests. Indeed, Bray (2005, p. 50) claims that the danwei shared many characteristics of the traditional, Confucian extended family(*jia*): "Thus, as the *danwei* became a fully fledged tightly knit community it bestowed upon its members a similar sense of collective identity that had been the hallmark of traditional familial relations. The grassroots *danwei* became the *jia* of socialist China, albeit a *jia* transformed in crucial ways."[6]

Of course, the Soviet Union had small work collectives as well, but they were not the self-contained, comprehensive social communities that the *danwei* were. Most urban citizens in the Soviet Union received housing, education and medical services from municipal authorities rather than their place of work, and labor mobility and absenteeism in the Soviet Union was quite high. Instead, the task of the Soviet work collective was more narrowly defined towards fulfilling specific production goals handed down from planning authorities. For many Russians, therefore, the work collectives represented simply another site of discipline than a way of life, and the informal networks that did emerge within the workplace they tended to be organized as a defense against formal discipline rather than working to complement formal policies (see Sil 1997).

By the time Mao died in 1976, the mass campaigns and social cellularization had left both state and society in a weakened state. The reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping and his deputies in 1978 sought to rebuild them. Under the slogan to "Control Less in Order to Control Better," these post-Mao reformers streamlined the central government, halving the number of ministries, slashing the number of state workers, and replacing older cadres with younger and better-educated elites (Dickson 2003). Local governments acquired a vast array of new rights and obligations, particularly with regard to economic policy: they now had the right to raise revenue through taxation, but were also given greater responsibility for economic development and the provision of social welfare. In response, townships and villages expanded their organizations and staff and began competing with one another to attract private investment; many also fell increasingly into debt as they tried to finance these new responsibilities (Baum and Shevchenko 1999).

As a result of these reforms, the state has become leaner and more efficient, but also more differentiated both vertically between central and local authorities and horizontally between differing functional bureaucracies. The introduction of market forces, the decline of state industry and rise in labor mobility also undermined the influence of the *danwei* and other state-organized collectives as an organizing influence in people's daily lives (Chen 2012),

[6] A more elaborate version of this argument can be found in Li 1991.

even as the dislocations of the market increased the demand for some sort of societal interventions. It is in this context that the regime encouraged more social activism. The first steps coincided with the ambitious program of capital accumulation and market reform, the "Four Modernizations" introduced by Deng after Mao's death, and were significantly expanded in the 1990s to deliver social services made necessary by the deepening of market reforms. As Li (2012, p. 1), a deputy secretary in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, recently argued: NGOs represent "an indispensable force in a market economy … an organic part of social management … the link that bridges the state and wider society."

To ensure these social organizations could not provide a base for organized opposition, Beijing adopted registration requirements in 1998 that in many respects were more onerous than those required under Russia's 2006 law. Organizations seeking registration with the Ministry of Civil Affairs had to have an office and a regular staff, a membership of over 50 individuals (or 30 institutional members) and an operating fund of at least 30,000 RMB. (Ma 2007, p. 66; Gallagher 2004, p. 424). Unlike Russia, however, the Chinese regulations supplemented such direct administrative with additional measures seeking to embed Chinese organizations within institutional networks that would constrain their actions. In addition to registering with MOCA, for example, Chinese organizations must also secure a government-affiliated sponsor (*guakao danwei*), a so-called "mother-in-law," which would then be held responsible for the smaller organization's behavior. Meanwhile, in the same year, the Chinese Communist Party sent a circular that called for the creation of Party cells and strengthening party work in all social organizations with more than three party members. (Saich 1994, p. 133).

The 1998 regulations also sought to forestall any widespread organized dissent by discouraging horizontal linkages between organizations within and across different regions. Thus, the regulations required that social organizations register only with the local MOCA bureau in the jurisdiction where they are based, thereby prohibiting any affiliations in other regions. They also mandated that no "similar" organizations should operate in the same jurisdiction. This ensured that organizations approved by the party-state enjoy unrivaled authority in their field. As a result of these regulations, the structure of Chinese NGOs in any given policy arena came to resemble a pyramid with a single national organization at the apex with other, government-approved regional and local organizations radiating downward. These registered groups, officially known as "social organizations" (*shehui zuzhi*) but widely understood to be GONGOs, tend to be larger and more stable. The broad base of the pyramid consists of many smaller grassroots organizations that have not sought formal legal status.

The broad base of the pyramid consists of many more small grassroots organizations at the local level that have not sought formal legal status. Though these organizations generally limit their activities to local arenas, they are incorporated into larger *guanxi* networks and structures of larger organizations, and are likely to be less isolated than similarly small, unregistered organizations in Russia. In many rural villages, for example, Tsai (2007) finds that traditional networks such as lineage groups and temple organizations have re-emerged since the party-state began relaxing some of its governing controls in the late 1970s, creating a thick web of mutually reinforcing moral obligations that help keep local officials accountable. Likewise, other researchers such as Read (2007) and Chen and Lu (2007) point to urban centers, where private homeowners have formed their own associations and neighborhood residents have formed their own committees with high levels of engagement with municipal authorities.

Many of these unregistered grassroots organizations are also engaged in matters of wider public interest, providing health and education services, helping the growing population of migrant laborers and even engaging in environmental advocacy. Many work under the wing

of established groups, such as universities, perhaps to implement a particular project (Ashley and He 2008, p. 45). Others avoid the registration process altogether, trading the privileges and relatively security of formal legal status for the freedom of operating without the surveillance and control of a supervisory agency.

However, even though such organizations technically operate outside the law, government officials often have good reasons for tolerating and even encouraging such organizations to be active (Hildebrandt 2011; Spires 2011a). If local governments are looking to social organizations to provide services at lower cost, for example, they may have an interest in having multiple organizations working on issues of great concern in their jurisdiction, even though regulations only allow one to be registered. In addition, they may be working on an issue, such as homosexual transmission of HIV or migrant labor, that the regime does not want to acknowledge through registration. The founder of a grassroots NGO advocating for people with HIV-AIDS in Xian told us (interview, 14 July 2007) that he enjoys greater "flexibility" being unregistered, but added that he routinely collaborates with official groups, including GONGOS and even the provincial health ministry.

The increased differentiation among Chinese authorities also provides an incentive for government authorities to seek assistance from social organizations. Local authorities can enlist the help of NGOs to meet the demands of the central authorities (and take the blame if they do not succeed) (Spires 2011a), while central authorities can use social organizations as an alternative source of information to enforce the law and reduce corruption; for example, one of China's first NGOs, Friends of Nature, worked closely with the State Environmental Protection Agency (now a ministry) to save the snub-nosed monkey in Yunnan Province, where local authorities eager to promote economic development and expand the tax base had authorized widespread logging (Sun and Zhao 2008, p. 150).

In sum, social organizations in China are arranged in a hierarchical, pyramidal pattern dominated by the state, but it is a pattern that often incorporates both "state" and "grassroots" organizations. The interaction between organizations in this field, moreover, is governed by a variety of formal and informal networks and practices where the boundary between state and social actors, between public and private relations, is often blurred and overlapping. Even among those grassroots organizations that technically operate illegally, there exists what Anthony Spires calls a contingent symbiosis, where the state tolerates and even encourages local activism so long as organizations respect boundaries and make no claims for more democratic governance.

These "embedding ties that can successfully cross the divide between the party-state and society" both limit activism and make it possible (Ho and Edmonds (2013), p. 6). On the one hand, such ties increase the incentive for social organizations to work within acceptable boundaries while providing additional surveillance and constraints to ensure they do not cross those boundaries; for example, Read (2007, p. 172) argues that homeowner associations "are better served by a certain kind of 'hands-on' state … rather than a 'hands-off' attitude that leaves the homeowners entirely to their own devices. Given the power asymmetries between homeowners and developers, the unreliability of the legal system, and the barriers to collective action, state support of the organizational process can help promote the formation of accountable groups rather than developer-dominated ones."

Organizations that work effectively within the boundaries set by the authorities are particularly active in the environmental field, where the central government relies on them to educate the public about programs such as recycling and push local governments to enforce anti-pollution policies; for example, the Global Environmental Institute is a Beijing-based NGO that carries out what it calls "market-based initiatives" to conserve energy and protect environmental resources. It has collaborated with the party-state on a "Clean

Development Mechanism" to import Western technology to use in reducing carbon emissions in metallurgy, road paving and other domestic industries. It has also developed a curriculum for communist leaders who, until recently, have graduated from the central party school without any formal training in environmental policy.

However, the overlapping spheres also provide spaces at the margins where social organizations can negotiate with state authorities on issues of policy and autonomy. Under dual supervision, for example, the sponsors clearly have an interest in ensuring that organizations under their tutelage do not transgress boundaries, but they also frequently have an interest in collaborating with these smaller organizations and advocate for them towards superiors. As a result, even those organizations at the top of the pyramid can be found advocating policies somewhat at odds with government policy; for example, the All-China Environmental Federation (ACEF) dominates the arena of social organizations working to achieve national conservation goals ("reduce, reuse, recycle, rescue, and re-evaluate"). On its Website, which it shares with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, ACEF says its mission is to help "implement the strategy of sustainable development" as defined by the state, to "keep contacts with influential and high-profile senior personages, unite a variety of social groups, and play the role of solidarity and coherence …"(Ministry of Environmental Protection Website 2012). However, the parastatal organization is an aggressive advocate for the environment; it has mounted investigations and even filed public interest lawsuits against polluters and their allies in local government. One environmental activist says his NGO is "on very good terms with AECF," which he describes as a "positive force" for change.

Even in the more fractious field of HIV-AIDS activism, where problems of public health intersect with concerns for social justice, we found numerous groups that are willing to collaborate with authorities. Consider the example of Shanghai CSW & MSM Center (SCMC), an NGO that represents male sex workers. "This is a long march" toward civil rights for people with AIDS, and people in jeopardy of contracting AIDS, like sex workers, says Tony Zheng, the organization's founder. "We have to move slowly. It would be rather easy for the government to shut us down, and if they managed to do that, we could not provide services to people in need (Interview, Shanghai, 13 August 2009)." Not only does SMSC recognize the supremacy of the party-state, the party-state recognizes the value of a small group, like SMSC, that is not a registered NGO. Government officials specifically appreciate the fact that SMSC hands out condoms and educational pamphlets to sex workers around the Shanghai train station—one of many services they would rather not provide.

Unlike Russia, then, where public and private tend to operate in mutually exclusive spheres, China has a fuzzy boundary between state and society. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to tell the two apart. However, while Chinese social organizations routinely trespass into the traditional territory of the party state, they rarely transgress the rules of the political game. "Indeed, grassroots NGOs survive only insofar as they limit any democratic claims making and help promote the social welfare goals of the state," according to Spires (2011a, p. 36). They can negotiate with the party-state, but only on its terms. China's communist leaders allow social organizations some room to operate—as long as they operate within the pyramidal structure dominated by the CCP.

Conclusions

Why do some authoritarian regimes not merely tolerate but actually promote the proliferation of civil society? That was the central question tackled in this essay, and we answered it by pointing to the nature of increasingly globalized and liberalized markets, which require

all capitalist regimes to adopt norms of political inclusion, even if such inclusion is rather limited or superficial, as well as adopt a style of self governance that is less costly and more efficient for the state. While authoritarian regimes like Russia and China are not necessarily becoming more democratic, they *are* becoming more market-minded, and thus more interested in acquiring the benefits of collaboration with social organizations.

We acknowledge that an authoritarian regime faces a risk in doing this; when it releases its grip on society, the state may invite upheaval or even democratic revolution. In the cases analyzed here, though, Russian and Chinese political elites have taken steps to manage this process: tightly regulating new groups, maintaining control of financial flows, and reserving for themselves the right to repress groups, often arbitrarily. In the end, Moscow and Beijing believe that the benefits of a managed civil society outweigh the risks. As they have reduced the scope of the central government, they have looked to social organizations as partners that can assume some of the burden of designing and delivering education and social welfare. In principle, this process should make them more flexible, more efficient, and stronger. It also should enhance their legitimacy and reputation.

Our effort to explain an empirical paradox led us backwards, inductively, into well-traveled, but still unsettled terrain in the theory of comparative politics. Others before us have struggled to nail down the slippery concept of "civil society." We concluded that it is more useful to treat it as a historical rather than a universal category. Likewise, we found it more helpful to look at it as an operational rather than an ontological construct. That is, rather than defining civil society in the customary manner as the given space between the state and the household in democratic regimes, we chose to treat it as the undetermined complex of relationships that shape the contours and boundaries of associational life, or the public sphere, in any regime overseeing a market economy.

This approach enabled us to investigate more productively the similarities between state-society relations in Russia and China. For example, we showed how both regimes distinguish carefully between civil and uncivil society; how both treat society as a unified entity served by, and in the service of, the state, and how they enforce the boundaries between the public and the private by resorting to a variety of direct and indirect regulations.

Simultaneously, however, we found significant differences in the shape of state-society relations in each regime. The Kremlin has drawn a sharp, distinct line between state and society. Since the state believes it must monopolize the public sphere to avoid anarchy, it tries to control what it views as a fractious and divided society. Social organizations sanctioned by the state become discredited as appendages of the state, leaving citizens with an extra-institutional choice: They can either retreat further into private networks outside the public eye or, alternatively, oppose the state directly in public demonstrations as they did in 2011 and 2012.

In China, by contrast, we found a blurry line between state and society. The two sides overlap in a "pyramidal" structure with a relatively small but strong state at the top, guiding the process of making and implementing policy, parastatal or co-opted groups in the middle, and grassroots organizations at the bottom, generally following along.

Although we explained the different shape of state–society relations in Russia and China by analyzing distinctive historical traditions and contemporary institutions, we did not speculate on the political implications. Our analysis, however, does lead us to be less sanguine about Russia than about China. In the former, the Putin administration's inability to foster more robust civic activism indicative of larger trend towards stagnation under the current regime. So long as maintains that state must maintain careful watch over society or risk anarchy, unwilling to allow for autonomy not only among civic activists but in all aspects of society, it will have a difficult time accommodating the demands of a globalizing

world. In China however, where public and private interests tend to overlap and where relations between the governmental and nongovernmental sectors proceed within an interactive but generally top–down, pyramidal structure, we see room for continued negotiation between state and society. Social unrest may continue apace, but the Chinese party-state appears willing and able to accommodate the demands of an increasingly restive society—as long as those demands do not include fundamental change. Like us, Gallagher (2004, p. 443) believes this dynamic is likely to produce continued incrementalism: "To understand future political change in China … one must pay attention to the shifting boundary between state and social groups—including those that may seek out a close, mutually beneficial relationship with state institutions and in doing so affect change within the state itself."

In the end, then, we are left with this irony: Of the two authoritarian-capitalist regimes studied here, the one still tethered to its socialist revolutionary past seems more able to adjust to the demands of the globalizing world than does reformed Russia.

References

Achmatova, N. (2013). Moscow cracks down on NGOs, targets religious communities. *Asia News.It* (April 30). Available from http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Moscow-cracks-down-on-NGOs,-targets-religious-communities-27798.html.

Anderson, P. (2010). Two revolutions. *New Left Review, 61*, 59–96.

Ashley, J. S., & He, P. (2008). Opening One eye and closing the other: the legal and regulatory environment for 'Grassroots' NGOs in China Today. *Boston University International Law Journal, 26*, 29–96.

Balzer, H. (2003). Managed pluralism: Vladimir Putin's emerging regime. *Post-Soviet Affairs, 19*, 189–227.

Balzer, H. (2008). Russia and China in the global economy. *Demokratizatsiya, 16*(1), 37–47.

Bartelson, J. (2006). Making sense of global civil society. *European Journal of International Relations, 12*, 371–395.

Baum, R., & Shevchenko, A. (1999). The 'State of the State'. In M. Goldman & R. MacFarquhar (Eds.), *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms* (pp. 333–362). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bray, D. (2005). *Social space and governance in urban China: the Danwei system from origins to reform*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Brownlee, J. (2007). *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bunce, V., & Wolchik, S. (2011). *Defeating authoritarian leaders in post-communist countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chen, J. (2009). Thoughts on comparative civil society evaluation indices based on China's conditions. *China Nonprofit Review, 1*, 59–77.

Chen, X. (2012). *Social protest and contentious authoritarianism in China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Chen, J., & Lu, C. (2007). Social capital in urban China: attitudinal and behavioral effects on grassroots self-governance. *Social Science Quarterly, 88*, 422–442.

China Development Brief (2012). *Special report: the roles and challenges of International NGOs in China's Development*. China Development Brief: Beijing.

Cohen, J. L., & Arato, A. (1994). *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Deng, G. (2010). The hidden rules governing China's unregistered NGOs: management and consequences. *The China Review, 1*(2010), 183–206.

Diamond, L. (1994). Toward democratic consolidation. *Journal of Democracy, 5*, 4–17.

Dickson, B. J. (2003). *Red capitalists in China: the party, private entreprenuers, and prospects for change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edwards, B., & Foley, M. (1997). Escape from politics? Social theory and the social capital debate. *American Behavioral Scientist, 40*, 550–561.

Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (1996). Introduction. In D. Hulme & M. Edwards (Eds.), *Beyond the magic bullet: NGO performance and accountability in the post-Cold War World* (pp. 1–11). West Hartford: Kumarian Press.

Ehrenberg, J. (1999). *Civil society: the critical history of an idea*. New York: New York University Press.

Evans, A. B., Jr. (2008). The first steps of Russia's public chamber: representation or coordination? *Demokratizatsiya, 16*, 345–362.

Fitzpatrick, C. A. (1999). *Everyday Stalinism: ordinary life in extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Gal, S. (1997). Feminism and civil society. In J. Scott, C. Kaplan, & D. Keatsn (Eds.), *Transitions, environments, translations: feminisms in international politics* (pp. 30–45). New York: Rutledge.
Gal, S., & Kligman, G. (2000). *The politics of gender after socialism: a comparative-historical essay*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Gallagher, M. E. (2004). China: The Limits of Civil Society in a Late Leninist State. In M. Alagappa (Ed.), *Civil society and political change in Asia: expanding and contracting democratic space* (pp. 419–454). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Gordenker, L., & Weiss, T. G. (1996). Pluralizing global governance: analytical approaches and dimensions. In N. O. Gordenker & N. O. Weiss (Eds.), *NGOs, the UN and global governance*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
Gordon, C. (1991). Introduction. In G. Burcell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality, with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault* (pp. 1–51). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Gudkov, L. D., Dubin, B. V., & Sorkaia, N. A. (2008). *Postsovetskiy chelovek i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo [The Post-Soviet Person and Civil Society]*. Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovaniy.
Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Hemment, J. (2009). Soviet-style neoliberalism? Nashi, youth voluntarism and the restructuring of social welfare in Russia. *Problems of Post-Communism, 56*(6), 36–50.
Henderson, S. L. (2008). *Shaping civic advocacy: international and domestic policies towards Russia's NGO sector*. Seattle: Evans School of Public Affairs Project on Rethinking Advocacy Organizations. Available at evans.washington.edu/files/HendersonAdvocacyChapter.pdf. Accessed on April 20, 2009.
Henry, L. (2010). *Red to green: environmental activism in Post-Soviet Russia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Hildebrandt, T. (2011). The political economy of social organization registration in China. *China Quarterly, 208*, 970–989.
Ho, P., & Edmonds, R. L. (Eds.). (2013). *China's embedded activism: opportunities and constraints of a social movement*. New York: Routledge.
Holquist, P. (2002). *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Howell, J. (2004). New Directions in Civil Society: Organizing around Marginalized Interests. In J. Howell (Ed.), *Governance in China*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
Howell, J., & Pearce, J. (2001). *Civil society and development: a critical exploration*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
Hsu, C. (2010). Beyond civil society: an organizational perspective on state-NGO relations in the people's republic of china. *Journal of Civil Society, 6*(3), 259–277.
Jakobson, L. I., & Sanovich, C. V. (2009). Smena modelej rossijskogo tret'ego sektora: faza importozameshcheniia [Changing models of the Russian third sector: the phase of import substitution]. *Obshchestvo i Reformy, 4*, 21–34.
Javeline, D., & Lindemann-Komarova, S. (2010). A balanced assessment on Russian civil society. *Journal of International Affairs, 63*(2), 171–188.
Jowitt, K. (1983). Soviet Neotraditionalism: the political corruption of a Leninist Regime. *Soviet Studies, 68*(1), 171–191.
Kharkhordin, O. (2001). What is the State? The Russian Concept of *Gosudarstvo* in the European Context. *History and Society, 40*, 206–240.
League for the Health of the Nation (*Liga zdorov'e natsii*) (2006). A healthy nation means a strong state (*Zdorovaya Natsiya—sil'noe gosudarstvo)*. League for the Health of the Nation/Documents Website. Available from http://www.ligazn.ru/business/allaboutlzn/documents/. Accessed 10 July 2012
Ledeneva, A. (1998). *Russia's economy of favors: blat, networking and informal exchange*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Ledeneva, A. (2008). *Blat* and *Guanxi*: informal practices in Russia and China. *Comparative Studies in Society and History, 50*(1), 118–144.
Levitsky, S., & Way, L. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Li, H. (1991). *Die Grundstruktur der Chinesischen Gesellschaft vom Traditionellen Klansystem zur Moderned Danwei-Organization [The Foundational Structure of Chinese Society from the Traditional Clan System to the Modern Danwei Organization*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
Li, Y. (2012). The development of social organizations in China. *China Journal of Social Work, 5*, 173–177.
Ma, Q. (2007). *Non-governmental organizations in contemporary China: paving the way for civil society?* London: Routledge.

Mao, Z. (1961). Methods of Work of Party Committees. In *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. IV.* Beijing: Foreign Language Press.
Ministry of Civil Affairs (China). (2013). *Zhongguo Minzheng Tongji Nianjian 2012 (China Civil Affairs Statistical Yearbook for 2012)*. Beijing: China Statistics Press.
Ministry of Environmental Protection website (2012). Affiliated Organizations. Available from (http://english.sepa.gov.cn/About_SEPA/Social_Organizations/200708/t20070814_107914.htm).
Mitchell, T. (1991). The limits of the state: beyond statist approaches and their critics. *American Political Science Review, 85*, 77–97.
Naughton, B. (1995). *Growing out of the plan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Naughton, B., (2013). Orthodox Corruption. *Al Jazeera*. Available from http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/peopleandpower/2013/02/2013267215745877.html). Accessed 7 February 2013
Perry, E. J. (2012). *Anyuan: mining China's Revolutionary tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Public Chamber of the Russian Federation. (2010). *Doklad o sostoianii grazhdanskogo obshchestvo v Rossiyskoy Federatsii[Report on the state of civil society in the Russian Federation]*. Moscow: Obshchestvennaia palata.
Public Chamber of the Russian Federation. (2013). *Doklad o sostoianii grazhdanskogo obshchestvo v Rossiyskoy Federatsii[Report on the state of civil society in the Russian Federation]*. Moscow: Obshchestvennaia palata.
Putin, V. (2004). Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, May 26. Available from http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/05/26/1309_type70029type82912_71650.shtml.
Putin, V. (2005). Introductory Remarks at a Meeting for the Council for Facilitating the Development of Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights July 20. Available from www.rusembcanada.mid.ru/pr/sprf_02.html.
Putin, V. (2012). Speech for the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, June 22, 2012. *President of Russia Website.* Available from http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4056. Accessed 23 June 2012.
Read, B. (2007). Inadvertent political reform via private associations: assessing homeowners' groups in new neighborhoods. In E. Perry and M. Goldman (Eds.), *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China* (pp. 149–173). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Richter, J. (2009a). Putin and the public chamber. *Post-Soviet Affairs, 25*, 40–66.
Richter, J. (2009b). The ministry of civil society?: the public chambers in the regions. *Problems of Post-Communism, 56*, 7–20.
Robertson, G. (2011). *The politics of protest in hybrid regimes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Rozhdestvenskaia, Y. et al. (2013). NGO funding at risk as pressure increases. *Kommersant* (February 6). Johnson's Russia List, no. 25. Available from http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs156/1102820649387/archive/1112380862058.html. Accessed 6 February 2013
Saich, T. (1994). The search for civil society and democracy in China. *Current History* (September) (pp. 260–264).
Seligman, A. (1992). *The idea of civil society.* New York: The Free Press.
Shi, T. (1997). *Political participation in Beijing*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Shieh, S., & Deng, G. (2011). An Emerging Civil Society: The Impact of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake on Grass-Roots Organizations in China. *China Journal, 65*, 181–194.
Shue, V. (1994). State power and social organization in China. In J. Migdal, A. Kohli, & V. Shue (Eds.), *State power and social forces* (pp. 65–88). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sil, R. (1997). The Russian 'Village in the City' and the Stalinist System of Enterprise Management: the origins of worker alienation in Soviet State Socialism. In X. Lü and E. J. Perry (Eds.), *Danwei*, *the changing Chinese workplace in historical and comparative perspective* (pp. 114–141). Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe.
Sperling, V. (1999). *Organizing women in contemporary Russia: engendering transition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Spires, A. J. (2011a). Contingent symbiosis and civil society in an authoritarian state: understanding the survival of China's grassroots NGOs. *The American Journal of Sociology, 117*(1), 1–45.
Spires, A. J. (2011b). Organizational Homophily in International Grant making: US-Based Foundations and their Grantees in China. *Journal of Civil Society* (7:3), 305–331.
Spires, A. J. (2012). Lessons from abroad: foreign influences on China's emerging civil society. *China Journal, 68*, 125–146.
Spires, A. J., Tao, L., & Chan, K.-m. (2014). Societal Support for China's Grassroots NGOs: evidence from Yunnan, Guangdong, and Beijing. In *The China Journal*, Vol. 71 (January).
Squier, J. (2002). Civil society and the challenge of Russian Gosudarstvennost. *Demokratizatsiya, 10*, 166–183.
Stern, R. E., & O'Brien, K. J. (2012). Politics at the boundary: mixed signals and the Chinese state. *Modern China, 38*, 174–198.
Sun, Y., & Zhao, D. (2008). Environmental Campaigns. In K. J. O'Brien (Ed.), *Popular protest in China* (pp. 144–162). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sundstrom, L. M., & Henry, L. (2006). Russian Civil Society: Tensions and Trajectories. In A. B. Evans Jr., A. Laura, & L. M. Sundstrom (Eds.), *Russian civil society: a critical assessment* (pp. 305–322). Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

Surkov, V. (2005). *Vremia politiki: sekretnyi doklad Vladislava Surkova* (Time of Politics: Secret Report of Vladislav Surkov. *Radio Svoboda,* 7 November 2005. Available from http://www.svoboda.org/programs/tp/2005/tp.071105.asp.

Surkov, V. (2006). *Natsionalizatsiiya budushchego* (Nationalizing the Future)" *Ekspert*, 43(537). (20 November). Available from http://www.expert.ru/printissues/expert/2006/43/nacionalizaciya_buduschego/.

Teets, J. (2009). Post-earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts: the emergence of Civil Society in China? *China Quarterly, 198*, 330–347.

Tsai, L. L. (2007). The Struggle for Village Public Goods Provision: Informal Institutions of Accountability in Rural China. In E. J. Perry & M. Goldman (Eds.), *Grassroots political reform in contemporary China* (pp. 117–148). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tumanov, G. (2013). Russian NGOs Thought Likely to Be Badly Hit By Legislative Changes in 2013. *Kommersant* (30 January 2013). Johnson's Russia List, no. 23. Available from http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs156/1102820649387/archive/1112356951634.html. Accessed 4 February 2013

Volkov, V. (1997). Obshchestvennost': zabytaia praktika grazhdanskogo obshchestva [Obshchestvennost': a forgotten practice of civil society] *Pro et Contra.* 2:4 (Autumn).

Walder, A. G. (1986). *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: work and authority in Chinese Industry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Walters, W. (2002). Social capital and political sociology: re-imagining politics. *Sociology, 36*, 377–397.

Watson, A. (2008). Civil society in a transitional state: the rise of associations in China. In J. Unger (Ed.), *Associations and the Chinese state: contested spaces* (pp. 14–47). Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

Weigle, M. (2002). State and civil society from Yeltsin to Putin. *Demokratizatsiya, 10*, 117–146.

Winning, A. (2013). NGOs Slam Volunteer Law. *Moscow Times* (February 13).

Wood, A. (2006). Enforcement of the NGO Law: a deeper look. *The School of Russian and Asian Studies Website, October 29.* Available from (http://www.sras.org/news2.phtml?m=780).

Yang, M. M.-h. (1994). *Gifts, favors and banquets: the art of social relationships in China*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Yurchak, A. (2005). *Everything was forever until it was no more: the last Soviet generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zhou, T., & Wang, C. (Eds.) (2008). Gongjian: Shiqida hou Zhongguo Zhengzhi Tizhi Gaige Yanjiu Baogao ("Storming the Fortress: a research report on the reform of China's Political Institutions After the 17th Party Congress"). Urumqi: Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps Press.