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In the United States, Canada, and large parts of Europe, the role of nonprofit organizations and volunteers in providing social services is widespread. A majority of nonprofit organizations utilize volunteers. In fact, in the United States, many nonprofit grant funders consider the strength of an organization's volunteer base as a criterion for funding. They recognize that the number of volunteers and the quantity of time contributed are barometers for the involvement of the community and the importance of the organization to the community. In addition, volunteers provide cost savings in service provision and are instrumental in creating social capital among both volunteers and recipients of service.

The structure of and benefits provided by nonprofits and volunteerism are part of what the academic and political worlds call civil society. Civil society refers in general to the relationship between citizens and the state. A simple definition is offered by Henry and Sundstrom, (2006, p. 5): "a space of citizen directed collective action, located between the family and the state." Edwards summarizes the main ideas in the civil society discourse into three main frameworks (2004, p. 10). The first emphasizes associations, networks, and informal voluntary organizations, both political and apolitical, which occupy the space between the individual and the state. The second conceives of civil society as seeking moral and ethical values and protecting human equality. The third focuses on the institutionalized norms that facilitate the existence and functioning of associations and networks, e.g. the public sphere. The three conceptualizations are complementary in function (Edwards, 2004). For example, voluntary associations provide spaces for ethical and moral actions, while the public sphere ensures that there are norms and structures (legislation, etc.) to undergird such associations.

The literature on civil society points to various expectations regarding the functioning of civil society. Many Western approaches expect that citizen associations will serve their function through confrontation with the state, acting as a link between citizens and the state (Hale, 2002; Johnson & Saarinen, 2011). Alternative expectations of civil society recognize that the relationship between the citizen and the state can take other forms. The state can promote, protect, or restrict organizations. Another option is cooperation between organizations and the state to meet the needs of citizens (Johnson & Saarinen, 2011; Thomson, 2006).

In the United States, civil society manifests itself in all of these ways. In the sphere of social welfare in particular, there is strong cooperation between private organizations and the state. In other parts of the world, such cooperation between the state and the private sector is a new phenomenon fraught with suspicion and difficulty.

This paper explores what civic culture frameworks are articulated by NGO leaders, and how historical and current political context plays a role in shaping these frameworks and the paths of organizations in one city in Russia.

RUSSIAN CONTEXT

Of the countries of the post-Soviet sphere, Russia remains the most influential. Social policy decisions in Russia have repercussions in other former Soviet countries, both due to political influence and to the high number of migrant workers from those countries. Conducting this research in Russia provided several concrete advantages. Volunteerism is a new phenomenon in Russia, and because of pressing needs and scarce resources, volunteer organizations are developing and working in innovative ways in the field of social services

(Petukhov, 2008; Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010). In addition, the kind and scope of collaborations they have with one another and with government bodies are varied. Because the transition from a socialist past to a “managed capitalism” has been tumultuous and contradictory (Field & Twigg, 2000), and because volunteers and volunteer organizations do not have indigenous historical models to draw from, the Russian context provides an ideal setting in which to examine innovations.

In addition, the Russian context is one of great need for both preventive and ameliorative services. The rate of poverty is fairly high, with 32% of the population not having enough income to afford both food and clothing for their family in 2008. Another 51% could afford food and clothing, but not items such as refrigerators, washing machines, etc. In 2008, only 16% of the population was considered middle class, and 1% was considered upper class (Russian Public Opinion Research Center, 2009). Unfortunately but predictably, this correlates with a high rate of child abuse and neglect (Berrien, Aprelkov, Ivanova, Zhmurov, & Buzhicheeva, 1995; Balachova, Bonner, & Levy, 2009; Ovcharova & Popova, 2005). Due to massive unemployment and the increase in substance abuse since 1991, the percentage of children in the care of the state has increased annually (Carter, 2005). At the same time, services and benefits formerly provided by the Soviet state have significantly diminished (Guslyakova, 2006; Kornai, Haggard, & Kaufman, 2001). **(update these statistics)**

The vast majority of civil society research in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia looks at human rights or democracy development organizations, foci undoubtedly critical to understanding civil society’s development and political impact. An understudied aspect of civil society in post-communist countries is volunteerism and NGO formation at the grassroots level in less-politicized spheres. This paper focuses on volunteerism and NGO formation in the social welfare sphere because citizens who engage in social welfare volunteerism are choosing a less overtly political arena while still demonstrating a belief in their responsibility to wider society. Their participation promotes citizen interaction in the definition of social problems and mobilization in solving them. Volunteerism in the social service sphere is a foundational aspect of civil society.

Before moving on to describing data and methods, a brief summary of civil society in Russia (and an historical overview of family and child social policy and services??? Add this??) is given, followed by more foundational theoretical discussion.

CIVIL SOCIETY & CIVIC CULTURE

The concept of civic culture is grounded in the overarching theory and literature of civil society already reviewed above. Before clarifying exactly how this paper uses the term civic culture, the evolution of the concept is summarized.

The conceptual roots of civic culture can be traced to the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, who concluded that volunteerism and formation of civic associations were keys to a functioning democracy (1834). Tocqueville posited that cooperative behavior is driven by an understanding that self-interest is often best served by working with others towards long-term societal goals (1834). In 1963, Almond and Verba re-invigorated this term, defining it as an ideal type of society with “a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions and the like...that support participation”, (1963). Almond further elaborated with:

“A civic culture is said to be constituted by psychological attitudes amongst citizens that support the development of an active role for them in governance and create

substantial consensus on the legitimacy of political institutions and the direction and content of public policy, a widespread tolerance of a plurality of interests and belief in their reconcilability, and a widely distributed sense of political competence and trust in the citizenry”, (Almond, 1980, p. 4).

In *Making Democracy Work*, Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti (1993) built on these ideas, creating the term “civic culture syndrome” to describe their findings that some regions of Italy evidenced a group of cultural behaviors that were correlated with more democratic governance, stronger economic growth, and higher levels of well-being. The behaviors included in this civic culture syndrome were described as: civic engagement; political equality; solidarity, tolerance, and social trust; and social structures of cooperation. Numerous authors use this framework as the basis of their research (Rice & Feldman 1997; Andrews 2007; Davidson-Schmich 2006). Others use this framework, but challenge its assertion that civic culture is fairly static over time (Janmaat 2006; McLaren & Baird 2006).

A more recent conceptualization of civic culture narrows the geographical focus of civic culture to a more local level and does away with the idea of an ideal type. Reese and Rosenfeld (2002; 2008, 2012) look at a local system as a whole comprised of three civic culture components: community value system, community power system, and public decision-making system. Although they uncover community values through individual interviews, their focus is on the system, not individual ideational factors leading to participation. Civic culture is the interaction of the three systems in a specific locality. Their approach is helpful for more macro theorizing and urban planning, as exemplified by authors such as Gainsborough (2008) and Bacot (2008).

The work of Dahlgren (1999, 2000, 2003) takes a more ideational approach to civic culture. Dahlgren initially posited five dimensions of civic culture (1999, 2003) and then added a sixth (2009). They are: knowledge and skills; values; trust; practices; identities; and spaces. More importantly, he wants to know why and how people decide to participate, and argues that rationality and reason cannot completely account for participation, but that the affective component of “passion” is involved (Dahlgren, 2009). Such ideas mirror the work of those studying political culture. These theorists argue that attitudes, norms and beliefs influence the participation of citizens and the functioning and survival of democratic institutions (Inglehart, 1990; Docherty, Goodlad, & Paddison, 2001; Miegel & Olsson, 2013).

Edwards (2009, 2010) takes an ideational approach as well. She goes back to Putnam et al.’s work, and posits that the heart of it is ideational. She argues that civic culture syndrome is supported by certain frameworks about the role of the individual and the state in the social world, although these frameworks are not explicated in detail. Civic culture assumes that both an individual’s and a society’s frameworks for understanding and interpreting themselves and their role in the social world is the driving force behind their subsequent action.

CIVIC CULTURE FRAMEWORK

This paper takes the ideational approach and rests on the assumption that some frameworks are more related to civic involvement than others. The term civic culture framework will be used to mean any framework that explains the role of the individual and the state in solving social problems. Thus, civic culture frameworks are not an ideal type, but the attitudes, beliefs, and norms that influence the behavior of individuals in society. These attitudes, beliefs, and norms may manifest themselves in various combinations. The frameworks common to a

culture will be strongly related to civic involvement of citizens in that culture, including volunteerism.

Several theoretical positions related to civic culture frameworks undergird the rationale for this paper. First, it assumes that civic culture is not static, but malleable, as argued by Levi (1996), Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer (1997), Lowndes and Wilson (2001), Janmaat (2006), Davidson-Schmich (2006), McLaren and Baird (2006), Bennich-Byorkman (2007), and Andrews, Cowell, and Downe (2011). Second and somewhat related, the paper rests on the premise that historical context and culture play a role in shaping civic culture frameworks. Numerous authors have pointed to the Soviet legacy as having an influence on civic culture development in post-communist countries, and they name ideational factors as key elements (Janmaat, 2006; Davidson-Schmich, 2006; Bennich-Byorkman, 2007; Korostelina, 2012; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer, 1997). Finally, this paper follows the theorizing of Reese and Rosenfeld (2012) that there are regional civic cultures, not simply a universal ideal type, although their work focuses on more macro aspects.

These theoretical positions are important for several reasons. If there were simply an ideal type, then all that would be needed to understand volunteerism in Russia is data on whether the institutions and behaviors of the citizens matched the ideal type. If civic culture is static, then the efforts of NGOs in promoting greater citizen participation are doomed to fail. If historical context and culture don't matter, then universal solutions to change should work (assuming that change is possible). According to the research cited in the previous paragraphs, we know these things are not true.

The puzzle of this paper arises out of the ashes of Soviet historical context and culture in which volunteerism (not compelled by the state) was non-existent and non-state-affiliated grass-roots organizations were banned until the late 1980s. The rate of volunteering among Russian citizens has been rising since 1991. Recent survey research shows an increase in the number of people participating in local self-organizing groups to provide services to those in need (Petukhov, 2008; Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010). Another project finds that students are less politically active but becoming more involved in local social service organizations (Vishnevski, Trynov, & Shapkov, 2009).

Why are people volunteering in greater numbers, despite a lack of history of volunteerism or volunteer organizations, and despite state pressure on NGOs and other forms of civic engagement? The Soviet legacy provides strong ideals of collective social responsibility; however, it also imbues society with the contradictory expectation that the state should take care of its citizens. During the Soviet era, collective social responsibility meant building and strengthening the state, which in turn took care of its citizens. The current Russian system does not function under this premise. Because of the abrupt change in the system after the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union and establishment of the Russian Federation, and a continuing high rate of policy change, civic culture frameworks are fractured and in flux.

Main question again:

This paper explores what civic culture frameworks are articulated by NGO leaders, and how historical and current political context plays a role in shaping these frameworks and the paths of organizations in one city in Russia

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was based in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. Nizhny Novgorod is a regional capital with 1.3 million residents and a per capita income of less than half of that in Moscow, providing a context somewhat removed from the power, resources, and greater international influence of Moscow. {should I not mention the name of the city??}

{please excuse the change in grammatical person – need to decide what person to write the paper in} I conducted nine months of ethnographic research. The main ethnographic methods I employed are participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviewing. I engaged in participant observation in three Russian grassroots volunteer organizations providing family and child welfare services. This included attending training meetings and leadership team meetings, serving alongside volunteers throughout the nine months, and conducting informal interviews with volunteers. Grassroots NGOs are defined as those founded by and still managed by Russian citizens. The three organizations have been in existence for at least five years. Throughout my study, I wrote field-notes and conferred with trusted cultural informants to check my understanding and interpretation of observations.

I adopted purposive sampling with specific criteria for my in-depth semi-structured interviews among adults aged 19-68, culminating in the following breakdown of participants/stakeholders: 16 NGO leaders, 11 social service professionals, 10 recipients of services at community organizations, 24 volunteers with social service organizations, 20 non-volunteers, and 2 government officials. Through both direct and indirect prompts, the interviews elicited participants’ understandings and attitudes towards community-based organizations, social services, and social policy. **This paper is based on the 16 interviews with NGO leaders and participant observation.** (maybe note that I interviewed the leaders of ALL social service NGOs in this city – communicate the nascent nature of social welfare ngos and small number of them)

To reveal interview subjects’ civic culture frameworks, I used a strategy described by Gamson in his 1992 book, *Talking Politics*. I presented scenarios of social problems and ask them to reflect on the problem and possible solutions. Other questions asked directly about their opinion of how much or little citizens should be involved in setting social policy, what they see as the role of volunteers and/or NGOs in solving social problems, and in what cases the government should do more or less and why, and their view of government and voluntary organization cooperation, both currently and ideally. At least three social problem scenarios were presented so that patterns became clear. In addition, if responses diverged, I was able to ask the interviewee to clarify. I also gathered demographic information and asked about how they became involved in volunteering, if applicable. Through both these indirect and direct prompts, I elicited interview subject reflections that expose their underlying civic culture framework.

DATA

Interviews		
<i>Interview Type</i>	<i>Number of interviews</i>	<i>Recruitment method</i>
NGO leaders	16	phone call, email, meeting
Volunteers	24	NGO leaders, universities, other orgs
Non volunteers	20	Through friends unrelated to research
Paid service providers	11	Called govt agencies for permission or met agency director at meeting
Recipients of service	10	NGO announcements

Government administrators	2	Phone call, other meeting
TOTAL	83	
Almost 110 hours of interviews, resulting in 1,600+ pages of transcribed interviews.		

Participant Observation

- 9 months in three organizations, 5 hours a week at each
- Selection criteria
 - Founded by & still managed by Russian citizens
 - Minimum 5 year existence
 - Providing actual services to families and/or children
- At least 12 hours @ each of other 9 organizations in the city

	Mean Age	Mean Years Volunteering	% Female	% Religious	% In or Completed Higher Ed	N
All interviewees	35	4.8	84%	48%	87%	83
Organization Leaders	38	11	75%	63%	94%	16
Volunteers	30	4	92%	54%	92%	24
Nonvolunteers	31	0	85%	20%	100%	20
Paid Service Providers	42	6.6	82%	55%	91%	11
Recipients of Service	36	2.4	90%	60%	30%	10
Government Administrators	50	N/A	50%	50%	100%	2

Of the 16 NGO Leaders

	Mean Age	Mean Years Volunteering	% Female	% Religious	% In or Completed Higher Ed	N
Volunteer Center Leader	32.6	9	75	20	75	5
Social Service NGO Leader	41.1	11.9	72.7	72.7	90.9	11

ANALYSIS

The analytic process used methods of grounded theory and a case study approach. The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. They remain in Russian to preserve their integrity. Nvivo software was used to analyze the data in an iterative process of coding, writing memos, and analysis. I followed a process suggested by Dierckx de Casterle, Gastmans, Byron, and Denier (2012) which involves two stages of analyses. Stage 1 of the analysis process involves looking at each interview as a case in itself, and taking the time for multiple readings of the transcription, thoughtful reflection, and writing. The outcome of this stage was a preliminary list of common concepts, themes, and gaps. In this stage of the process, I utilized a Russian native-speaker cultural consultant to read some of the interviews and write separate narrative reports to compare with my own. Stage 2 focused on more in-depth coding of interviews as well as analysis of concepts and development of a conceptual framework. I used Nvivo qualitative data analysis software for coding of individual transcripts. Throughout the process, I used free-style note-taking and memoing to document analytical insights. This facilitated making

systematic comparisons within and between cases and stakeholder groups and identification of patterns and variations. (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The stage 2 process was also an iterative one.

In preparation for sharing my results in English, I translated the quotations myself, and then had a native speaker of Russian back-translate them. This process was repeated until the best translation was agreed upon.

RESULTS

Results confirm other studies' conclusions that social service volunteering leads to establishment of service NGOs (citations). However, in the Russian context two different types of NGOs emerge from the common soil of social service volunteering. The first type, which I will call social service NGOs, focuses on providing direct service and/or training to people that provide direct service. This type of NGO is more active in advocacy for disadvantaged populations or policy change, and their motivation is articulated in their mission to serve a specific population. The second type, volunteer centers, are organizations which focus on providing volunteer opportunities primarily for young people. The opportunities often include short-term projects as well as calls to help social service NGOs pull off one-day or short term events or fundraising. The stated primary motivation of volunteer centers is to promote civic involvement in ways that support the government and to provide opportunities for individual "self-development."

The historical context of the Soviet system, interaction with foreign organizations, and the current legal and policy climate serve as influences cited by NGO leaders in describing the development and trajectory of volunteering and of their organizations. In addition, each of the NGO types that have emerged are connected to different civic culture frameworks, the roots of which evidence both the historical soil in which they grow and the impact of foreign interaction.

Volunteering served as the impetus for the establishment of NGOs in this city. Of the 16 NGO leaders that I interviewed, each one had become involved in NGO work through volunteering before the NGO was founded. Many of the organizations began as loose groups who decided to serve people faced with a particular social issue.

"I had always heard about orphanages and finally I just went and visited one. What I saw shocked me. I asked what I could do to help, and at first I just brought them supplies, like diapers and toys. I got some friends together and that's what we were doing, and then online I found some other people who were working in orphanages and we joined forces and started to do more to interact with the children."

"Our organization began with a group of us who were already professionals – psychologists and educators. ... I guess you could say we were volunteers, since this was not part of our jobs. ... later we found sponsors that could pay us for our work."

"The idea came up when hanging out with other friends who are in wheel chairs. We decided to start a group to create social opportunities for people with disabilities. Over time this goal changed and transformed because we gained experience and new opportunities arose. So we just widened our scope of work."

“I saw an ad online (for helping orphans in the hospital) and went once and enjoyed it. My interest rose in the process of volunteering.”

“We didn’t start out thinking to found an organization. As I said, we were volunteer carers going to the hospital to take care of babies who were sick and whose mothers had abandoned them.”

Even in the organizations that later became volunteer centers, initial foci of volunteering were primarily social service in nature, such as programs to help children coming out of institutional care adapt to independent life, programs to visit the elderly in institutional settings, and programs to promote inclusion of children with disabilities into activities with other school children.

“Back in 1997, L and I began our own volunteer project working with teenagers in the welfare system. At the time we were associated with a support center for NGOs. After about a year we separated from them and formed our own organization.”

“We took some school children to volunteer at an old people’s home and they loved it, so we continued setting up opportunities. Eventually it became an official part of the school and then a recognized volunteer center.”

In the process of volunteering, these NGO leaders became passionate about the work they were doing.

“I used to work as a lawyer, but was volunteering so much, I could see that my own family was suffering. So I understood that I had to make a choice: if I wanted to keep volunteering, that meant that I had to give up my job, and well, that’s what happened.”

“We weren’t an official organization for volunteers at the beginning, though we seem to be now. Our survival wasn’t dependent on money – we were committed to what we were doing.”

Over time, these loosely organized volunteer groups formalized into legally registered NGOs in the Russian context, and the interviewed leaders became formal leaders in the organizations, although they were and still are not necessarily paid. The narratives of these leaders exhibit a high degree of consistency when looking at the connections between NGO development and three influences: the soviet past, foreign interactions, and current laws, policies, & climate. All NGO leaders, regardless of the type of organization they were in, talked about how these elements impacted the acceptance of volunteering and NGOs by the government and the public, and the ability of the organization to obtain funding.

THE SOVIET PAST, FOREIGN INFLUENCE, AND CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE

During the Soviet era, volunteer activity was marginally voluntary and often mandated by party controlled work, neighborhood, or social organizations.

“There was volunteer work in Soviet times, but it was different. It was mostly young people from the Pioneers (communist youth organization for ages 10-15) or Komsomol (communist youth organization for ages 15-28), and they were organized by the government or some authorities of the government.”

In 1940 a youth volunteer movement called Timurites began among Little Octobrists (communist youth organization for ages 7 – 9) and Pioneers. These Timurite groups were founded and promoted within the youth organizations following the publication of a youth novel called “Timur and His Team.” Timur and his buddies went around doing good deeds in secret for soldiers’ families and tried to undermine local “hooligans.” A movie based on the book appealed to the youth of the nation, and doing “good deeds” became part of communist youth culture. Interviewed leaders referenced the Timurite movement as influential to the prevailing notions of volunteering. One current NGO leader links her involvement in volunteering as an adult to this film.

“When I was 6 years old, I saw the film “Timur and his Team,” and I wanted to do something good, because if you do something good, you feel strong and as if you are magic. That’s how I decided I wanted to volunteer, and this desire to volunteer remained.”

There were avenues of nonpaid service for adults during the Soviet period as well, also strictly controlled by the party.

“Yes, the Soviet system affects us in how everything develops. Yeah, in the Soviet system we had organizations, and they were strong national government controlled organizations. Everyone knew about them and paid member fees and in general, if there was activity related with the organization, then it was always social activity and ... especially people who wanted to move up into leadership or further their career were active.”

A majority of the leaders expressed nostalgia for the values of collective identity and working for the common good, explaining that these values almost disappeared after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In their work with volunteers, they see this returning to a small degree.

“For some reason it seems to me that patriotism played a big role during Soviet times. Everyone went [volunteered] because the Soviet Union was a power, “one for all and all for one,” and there was more ideology. Now it’s more as if personal wishes lead a person to volunteer. The herd mentality is gone.”

“The system of education at schools and what was here in Soviet times taught that we should help. For a while this foundation disappeared. Today, it seems to me, this is returning a little, and people want to help and do something good.”

In addition to values, leaders express appreciation for Soviet experience in leadership, while also noting the benefits of a more open society. “There was a lot of good knowledge and know-how that we got in the old system in government organizations. We need to keep that and transfer it to the new system.”

“Now there are probably more opportunities for volunteer work, more forms of volunteering, organizational forms, and volunteers and experience. Plus the lowering of the iron curtain, which allows us to communicate with foreign colleagues, share experience with other countries, and see what is happening there. Before that was problematic. Now the opportunities are open, plus the internet appeared, and skype, which have totally removed boundaries.”

However, leaders felt that the former Soviet system had a dampening effect on the development of NGOs in the area of funding. Because the vast majority of non-work organizations during the Soviet period were communist party-run social or professional organizations, people have not developed a concept of organizations that exist to provide a service to others, particularly social services. Even more, they have no understanding of how NGOs function or are financed. This lack of knowledge is coupled with the expectation that the government provide and fund all social services from a centralized system.

“People ask, ‘Olga, do you work? What, you work full time and receive a salary?’ For people it’s all ... understand, volunteering in the soviet union was like, you have a job and you have free time, and in free time you can do some kind of work for society. But you shouldn’t receive any pay for it. If they hear that we get paid, they think, ‘What, you take money away from the children?’ There is no understanding that to provide quality services you need to pay professionals and people to run the organization.”

“The idea was that you did this in addition to your main job. Because of this, it was and still is hard to develop the NGO sector, on the one hand, to be professional and have resources so that personnel can work full time and provide services. It’s hard to switch to provide quality professional services when the organization started with volunteers.”

“Here is the traditional understanding of NGO from those times -- that working in them is work on the side. You could say that people who finish university do things this way, because they understand that working in NGOs is not the most profitable option.”

Because of this generalized understanding, NGO leaders who receive compensation, no matter how little, expressed frustration and exhaustion at having to constantly justify their work and salary to others. In addition, they described a battle with discouragement that is always lurking in the background.

Leaders mentioned that the common public perception of volunteering arises out of the Soviet past as either something that young people do in the form of “good deeds,” or something that someone is obligated to do for free. They reported that some of their greatest difficulties arise out of this lack of public knowledge of volunteerism. Some of the confusion over volunteering arises out of semantics; the word “volunteer” was imported to Russia after 1990 and is widely used. However, the word “dobrovolchestvo” was used during Soviet times to mean unpaid work someone did for the sake of society. Many people use the words interchangeably, but some leaders say that the even older meaning of “dobrovolchestvo,” that of volunteering to serve in the army, casts this word with a somewhat negative connotation. At the same time, they felt that many people still had no concept of what a “volunteer” was.

“Sometimes I write on a social networking site “volunteer activity” and someone immediately responds and asks, “what is a volunteer?” They don’t understand. Until a person personally has experience with a volunteer, he doesn’t understand.”

However, they do see progress in both understanding and in returning to ideas of collective responsibility.

“It seems to me, that when you talk about volunteering, like cleaning the neighborhood, people get skeptical, because before they forced us and all, and then, when we went through the period of our lives, our country’s I mean, that if we ourselves didn’t do anything then in principle no one else did either. Now the social responsibility of each person, well, the citizen’s responsibility is understood more. Now it’s easier. We went from one extreme to the other. We thought that everything from the Soviet times was bad, and now we understand more ... that you shouldn’t help just yourself, but help the weak so that you get stronger, too.”

While leaders felt that misunderstanding of volunteering created difficulties, they stressed that lack of knowledge and negative perceptions of NGOs had even worse consequences for their work. The issue of semantics comes into play here as well. There are three names used for NGOs in Russia, and for those without personal experience of an NGO or someone working in one, these words are confusing. Since people have no historical social structure on which to hang the concept, they have trouble grasping it. The first word, “non-governmental organization,” is often understood to mean anything not government owned, such as businesses or private sports centers. The second, “non-commercial organization,” similar to “nonprofit organization,” is often taken to include the government. The third, “civil/social organization,” is close, but brings to mind communist party-controlled organizations such as chess clubs, professional unions (union of writers, for example), and other such organizations. The fact that modern NGOs can take several forms, conduct various activities, and collaborate more or less with the government clouds the issue even further.

What makes matters worse, the leaders said, was suspicion of NGOs by the general public. Some of it is due to lack of knowledge as described above, but in large measure it is fueled by government propaganda. As the leaders described, many early NGOs in Russia were international NGOs, while many others were founded with strong international funding and training. In fact, these training opportunities and sometimes funding trickled down to these small social service NGOs. The majority of the leaders in my study have participated in some type of training led by foreign organizations, and most of them have received small grants from foreign sources for their NGOs. The NGO leaders became aware of these opportunities over time by connecting through the internet with NGOs in Moscow or St. Petersburg. Many international NGOs were political in nature, working in the fields of human rights and democracy development. After the Rose Revolution in Georgia in November 2003 and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in November 2004, the Russian government began passing stricter laws regulating NGOs in the country, fearing that NGOs receiving foreign funding would foment political unrest. One particular law, often referred to as the “foreign agent” law, requires that an NGO register with the government as a “foreign agent” if they receive any funding from foreign sources and are involved in “political activity.” “Political activity” is not defined in the law. The term “foreign agent” is a term used synonymously with “spy” in Russian, in particular Soviet, history. In addition to passing legal measures, the government intensified a campaign against

NGOs, including negative coverage in news media to discourage the populace from participating in them. While the NGO leaders whom I interviewed were sympathetic to the government's need to protect the country, they felt that these government policies had the unintended consequence of increasing suspicion of their organizations.

In their view, this generalized suspicion combined with the lack of knowledge of NGOs contributes to difficulty in finding donors, a drop-off in volunteer numbers, and lowering of morale. They find that individuals are less likely to trust organizations and in turn unlikely to make donations. In addition, while philanthropy from businesses is on the rise, organization leaders find that unless they have a long track record and some connections, businesses are cautious about contributing to NGOs. In fact, businesses often contribute directly to government institutions such as orphanages and homes for the elderly. Likewise, potential volunteers are more cautious about becoming involved with NGOs. Finally, leaders describe increased questioning even from family members about their work in an NGO – instead of simple lack of knowledge of NGOs, family, friends, and acquaintances now make jokes about them being “foreign agents.”

“There are problems with the legal regulations of NGOs. In Russia there is a difficult political situation, where there is a lot of hypocrisy, where one thing is said, but a different thing is done. A lot of mass media presents things in such a light ... it is starting to remind me of the Soviet Union. There is news that NGOs are a scam, and in general the phrase NGO has become a curse word, like an organization that is registered but it's not clear what they do. Even if you try to explain that it is a social organization, even though we provide social services, they don't understand, and think you collect stamps or something..”

In general, NGO leaders have ambivalent feelings toward the federal government. They are encouraged by the great increase in grant programs for NGOs at all levels of the government, and for some strong relationships with local social service administrators. However, they are frustrated that the government has not fully embraced the contribution they make in the areas of social service, and wish that the government would help with educating the public about social service NGOs.

“The ngo sector is, in fact, not strong, and we can say that today the main problem is the promotion of the ngo sector.”

“We have a few really good NGOs in our city but there is a vacuum of knowledge; people don't know that they exist or what they do.”

“There are these different organizations developing, but there is a vacuum, yes, a lack of knowledge among the people that these organizations exist and what they do. Support from various levels of government is lacking ... they could help get out the information. And in various ways – on television, on the internet, in printed media. Yeah? There are many ways. Then people would know to what organizations they could go for help, or go to if they are prepared to help.”

Leaders also find the political climate stressful and difficult to navigate.

“The politics in Moscow are now such that on the one side, one hand is supporting the development of NGOs, while the other is trying to drive them into a certain mold. If earlier control was maintained by force, now it’s done by economic means, which is just as tough. So now, the party policy is to ensure that on the one hand volunteering and NGOs develop in the direction of government-overseen organizations, by giving funding to those that fit into the system, and the other hand represses those that do not fit. **We even had a wave of “verification” repression against NGOS. Maybe you heard?”** maybe delete this part about the government raids on ngo offices? Raids mostly on human rights organizations, but all ngos are nervous. Why delete? To protect the social service ngos from reprisals.

At the same time, they described mainly positive relationships with local government officials and with most state-run social service institution administrators. These relationships exhibit great power differentials, with NGOs in the low power position. Despite this, their work is slowly moving forward, and both types of organizations, social service and volunteer center, remain optimistic about their ability to contribute to their society.

CIVIC CULTURE FRAMEWORKS

The civic culture frameworks emerging from the narratives of NGO leaders coincide with the two NGO types I have delineated, social service and volunteer center. In these frameworks one can hear echoes of themes of Soviet background, foreign influence, and current political climate. Social service volunteering led to the establishment of NGOs, and over time NGO leaders began to see the bigger picture of social structure, including the impediments to social change. NGOs then began to diverge subtly in ways that have had lasting consequences in their current missions, with one type of NGO focusing on providing services and advocacy, and the other focusing on promoting civil engagement to support the government and facilitating personal growth opportunities.

1. Social service NGO leaders’ civic culture framework

Social Service NGO (SSNGO) leaders believe that the government should be responsible for addressing social problems and meeting needs, but it should do so with public-private partnerships, and acknowledging the benefits of NGOs in recognizing and defining problems, creating solutions, and providing services. Social service leaders also included in their frameworks a high priority for advocacy for a legal system that protects marginalized groups, for better enforcement of policy, and for creation of funding streams for social service NGOs. SSNGO leaders agree that funding of NGOs should be a priority for the government through grants and contracts, although funding/support should also come through citizen participation in the form of volunteering & donations, foundation support, and business philanthropy. This framework evinces strong ideas of both government responsibility for solving social problems and citizen participation in governance. This framework is evidenced in their descriptions of how things should work or do work in the areas of professionalization of services, funding,

management of their organizations, advocacy, focus of volunteering, and mission of the organization.

Professionalization of services of social service NGOs

Leaders of SSNGOs describe how they came to understand the need to move from volunteer-based to more professional services, though the organizations are still in the midst of this transition. In their narratives, we can see their civic culture frameworks regarding both government responsibility and citizen involvement emerging. As leaders recalled the trajectory of their organization, they described a sharpening of their mission as they began to understand the underlying structural issues contributing to the problem. In this sharpening process, they recommitted to providing services to a specific group while also refining how they did so.

Leader of organization working with children in institutional care, describing the move to work with families in crisis to prevent institutionalization

“Currently, our work is being built not only on volunteers, but to a greater degree on a professional understanding regarding what children in the care of the state really need. A large area of our work being developed this year is services with families in crisis. Work with children who are still living with their families. Why this change? People have wised up and seen that they are working with kids in orphanages, then these kids grow up, age out, and produce the same problems and give their children to the orphanage. We saw that the effectiveness of our work was low. Why not work with the families before the kids are in orphanages? Therefore, at this time our work with kids in orphanages is only about 30% of our work, whereas before it was 100%. And what we do in the orphanages now is totally different than what we did at the beginning. ... 30% of what we do is through volunteers at the orphanages, and for the rest we have professionals.”

“We'd rather say we still work with orphanages but we try not to make it high-profile; we make low-profile. Now we are working with children in foster families and they. but they need help. This is something we quite recently started doing, maybe a year ago. And I think that after a few years maybe the public attention will also move into that direction. Also, what changed um uh the state policy changed. In 2012 the government put a priority on finding families for children to live in.”

Leader of organization that provides nannies for hospitalized children in the care of the state

“You understand, volunteers are people who work, have families, and who can participate and dedicate only a part of their time – each as much as they can. Over time we realized that there was too much turnover of carers for each child. It was not good for the child or for his medical care. We realized that we had to solve this problem more professionally, namely with professional carers who could be paid to be with a child in the hospital. Instead of trying to raise money from private individuals, we decided to establish a fund with transparent accountability and pay professional nannies. Until the government takes responsibility for providing this type of service, we will fill the gap.”

Leader of organization providing services to people with schizophrenia and their families.

“We have to become more professional, high quality. There should be government financing. The social importance of the problem needs to be understood and then it will be possible to develop further. But for now, it’s enough that volunteers keep the work going. But to help people with quality services, this work should be paid, and financing should come from local and national government as grants. Without this we’ll never move to the next level.”

These organizations and others have made strides in creating innovative and formerly non-existent services. To some degree, all of them collaborate with a local government social service structure. The leaders of these organizations hold fast to their understanding that the government should be involved in addressing social problems, both in funding solutions and creating avenues for service provision. They also perceive NGOs as being “on the ground” and “close to the people and their problems” and as becoming more professional and competent in their work. This is one foundation of their civic culture framework that NGOs should be key participants in policy formation and service provision.

Funding

SSNGO leaders continue to believe that the government has the bulk of responsibility in solving social problems, but promote a system of public-private partnership. Particularly, they hold a strong opinion that the government should provide financing.

“Social problems are also the government’s problem, and they shouldn’t depend on the strength of volunteers to solve it; they need to provide financing for services.”

“There should be money set aside by the government on a competitive basis and NGOs would apply for it, and the best proposals would get the money.”

“The government cannot fund everything. It should be a government-private partnership. If the government cannot provide full support, it should provide office and facility space or pay for the rent for such a place. The organization can find other sponsors to help as well.”

This framework of partnership implies continued citizen involvement in the social service sphere.

- Organizational functioning

SSNGO leaders’ civic culture framework is also evidenced in how they manage their organizations. Due to their interaction with organizations in Moscow and St. Petersburg along with participation in training from and education from foreign organizations, they attempt to minimize the strongly hierarchical leadership style that they see coming from their Soviet past. Instead, they use a team leadership and participatory approach. However, they’ve had to educate their volunteers to this style of leadership and functioning.

“People aren’t used to the kind of volunteering we do. They expect someone to tell them what to do. But we understand volunteering to mean working together – solving problems and making decisions together.”

- **Advocacy**

SSNGO leaders expressed that working in advocacy is part of their mission, exhibiting a strong belief in citizen participation in governance. However, the form of advocacy taken by these leaders is strongly influenced by their context. On the one hand, they speak of advocacy as a taken-for-granted part of their work, such as raising a problem with government officials or working to pass a new law:

“We currently have a bill before the DUMA (Russian parliament) that will change the categorization of domestic abuse to its own criminal category, and will allow for orders of protection. Our organization and colleagues in other such organization around Russia have helped with this, and a lawyer is working with a Duma deputy to help pass this bill.”

“For example, there are families where a person is extremely ill but the family does not fall into the category of “crisis” or extreme poverty, but this is a family that needs help, just like the others. And of course, there is no help. Many times we have talked about this with government representatives. It’s a real problem in our time.”

“Plus, we’ve already talked with the government that they should raise the amount of social benefits and payments for citizens. It’s very important.”

“We often raise this topic with government granters.”

“No, that was well we we actually started going to orphanages in 2007 and we didn't register until 2010. But when we realized that we can't really go on, can't go to officials and can't be any um decision-maker in the industry we can't go on we can still go visit children we can play with them it's OK, but as soon as we want any legislative initiatives, as soon as we want to have dialog with the authorities at least some influence we need to have a legal entity. And that's how we started it.”

On the other hand, SSNGO leaders usually qualified their descriptions of advocacy-type work by alluding to issues of power, fear, and hesitancy. They recognize that the power differential between them and anyone with government authority is a immense, and government authorities could withhold permission for their activities at any time. Because of this, they avoid participating in any type of political protest or confrontational advocacy, preferring to foster a cooperative approach to solving social problems. Leaders mentioned fear on both sides of the table – fear of the government by NGOs, and fear of NGOs by the government.

“Another thing, I think, is that NGOs should understand that the government and government structures are not the opposition, but simply another resource, a really good resource, and that the goal of an NGO is to identify the problem and put it before the government, and tell the government that it has certain resources and suggest collaborating to solve it. But to say it not as if they have a position of power, but to recognize that both the government and NGOs have advantages and resources.”

One leader even described non-confrontational advocacy as something that those not involved in an organization as stress-inducing:

“I think that people see events that the mass media covers, like cleaning of some neighborhood or planting of trees, and they like that. They understand that to be volunteering. But if there is a part of volunteering that includes advocacy to change a social policy, I think that it brings up fear in the older generation.”

Government wariness of NGOs plays a part in the kind of advocacy SSNGOs choose as well.

“I want to add something. I have the impression that, let’s say, that the authorities as a whole understand that NGOs are necessary and that they’re important for the government. From the point of view that they are closer to the people, right? And NGO services lessen the social pressure. Together with that is, well, why hide it? There is fear [on the part of the government], right? Again, how much this is justified, it’s not for me to judge, maybe somehow NGOs will be used to interfere in the political system. Therefore the government has these rather strange initiatives that occur periodically, where they raid NGO offices and intimidate them.”

“You have to register. If you do any political activities you have to register as an international agent, which kind of hurts if you work with orphans. And political means anything. Advocating for human rights is political. Advocating for the rights of patients can be deemed political. So we had a lot of um, procurator's office checks, like the they uh pulled in dozens, like dozens of NGOs were checked

M: Were you checked?

“No, we weren't fortunately, but some of our colleagues here in the city were. Just random checkup, they come and they check all computer files to see if you are doing any terrorist activities or get any international funding. Any funding that comes from an international source, and they uh they claim the procurators claim that some of the for example patient rights advocates were a political institution. The organization fought the procurators for that, and they won the case. They managed to prove that they were not political. But anyway, they had to stop their activity for a week.”

Such actions on the part of government, in addition to legal restrictions mentioned earlier, create uncertainty and fear in SSNGO leaders, leading to hesitancy in advocacy on their part.

“There is a tendency for NGOs to develop into more professional organizations. The qualifications of their staff are higher, new opportunities arise, and their system of financing develops. But I don’t know. (pause) For example, the legal tendencies, they are contradictory. For example, the law about “foreign agents.” I, for one, am against it. On the grounds that participation in legislative activity is unclear. Can we, for example, communicate our views on the social protection of disabled people, or is this political activity? It’s unclear. Therefore it is a problem. The tendency is contradictory.”

In summary, the SSNGO leaders have a civic culture framework that values advocacy as a form of citizen participation with the state in solving social problems. Because of the political climate, they choose a form of advocacy that emphasizes cooperation with the state rather than confrontation.

“If you work as a staff member with an orphanage you cannot really do anything outside the main policy, the central policy. And if you're outside you get the fresh ideas you're independent, so you can't get fired by the Ministry of you don't have this boss. And it opens more possibilities, opportunities for changing it. It gives another view, and if we speak about legislation changes for example, NGOs I think should be definitely consulted because once on the the one thing that to get the opinion of people who work in orphanages, well take just one example, orphanages, and you get the opinion of NGOs who see the situation from a different angle.

- **Focus of** volunteering

As SSNGO leaders described the way volunteers contribute to their work, it becomes apparent that the focus of volunteering is mission focused. Volunteers are oriented and trained to understand the social service mission of the organization, and contribute in a variety of ways, from planning or executing fund-raising events, helping with renovations, serving as organizational support, or providing direct services to clients. However, these leaders also emphasize their belief that their organizations should continue the move towards greater professionalization. They see the role of volunteering as more limited: “Volunteers can help the professionals who work for the NGOs,” and are more articulate about the drawbacks of volunteers: “Volunteers are not available on a regular basis,” and “Volunteers are not qualified to do a lot of the work, and also cannot give the amount of time necessary.”

- **Mission of** organization

The mission of SSNGOs are focused on providing direct social services, improving direct social services by training providers, and advocating for changes in policy or provision. In addition, they innovate with new services. Having grown from volunteer movements, they have moved towards more professional service provision, and while still welcoming and using volunteers in their organizations, their main focus is on their social service mission rather than on developing volunteers. “Ideally, we could unite the government and NGO with volunteers to solve problems.” SSNGO leaders have learned to look both micro and macro structures and their interconnections, and want to put their knowledge and experience to work as citizen organizations collaborating with the state. One leader sums this up:

“The government should provide legal and policy foundations, and some institutions to help. Naturally, I think that the problems that the government should solve should be solved with the input of experienced NGOs who already do things and know how to do them. Not so that things are maximally inexpensive, but so that they are maximally effective AND economical, at the least.”

2. Volunteer center leaders' civic culture framework

Some early volunteer groups have solidified into volunteer centers. As articulated by leaders in these organizations, these centers promote volunteering in ways that support the government, while also providing “self-development” opportunities for individuals. The civic culture framework of volunteer center leaders is both more individually focused and more state-centric. They believe that the family or individual is responsible for solving their problems before they turn to the government. However, if they are still in difficulty, the government should provide monetary benefits and other services to those in need. In addition, the government should articulate a clear societal vision for the people to follow. Ideally, the government should provide most services, but in the event that this is not possible, it should turn to citizen groups for help. Volunteer center leaders had a more diffuse vision of civic culture – there should be mobilization to increase citizen participation in helping each other in their neighborhoods, so as to increase social trust and organized volunteering efforts. Some NGOs will be in the system to fulfill specific social service functions and the government should oversee and fund them.

Government should lead society with a vision

The most striking difference between SSNGO leaders' civic culture framework and that of volunteer center leaders is in the centrality of the government. Volunteer center leaders express a desire for the government to form and communicate a strong national vision for society. The role of NGOs in general is to support the implementation of this vision. SSNGO leaders never mentioned such an idea.

“I think that there should be social policy, policy of the government, that everyone understands and can follow.”

Volunteer center leader answering the last scenario question

“The government, as the head, should ... we're accustomed to everything coming from above. There's some kind of order and we try to fulfill it. Even when we have some kind of event, you invite business to it and also a representative of the government. Business people will come if a government authority will be there, because it will look like the event is worthwhile – a representative from the administration was there, wow, how cool, that means it was something important and necessary! All the same, some kind of mutual purpose should be propagated by the government, as we live in one country and shouldn't do things separately. It seems to me that it's not right when we don't agree; we should be united toward one goal, and strive towards it, so that we develop together. Certainly, local society and volunteers and NGOs should be involved in the creation of this society and together we can build something good on the island.”

- social service NGOs

Volunteer Center leaders affirmed the value of social service NGOs, while at the same time exhibiting a civic culture framework that places responsibility for solving social problems on the government. It was as if NGOs were good but only insofar as the government was not fulfilling its responsibility. In their ideal world, the government would take the lead and citizen organizations would “help.”

“The responsibility should be on the government. You could say that NGOs are simply quality executors of government tasks. So naturally, the financing should be different. The question is what the quality assessment criteria should be, and the plans for development and all of that. But we have a strong centralized system, and through this central system you should look to solve things.”

“As I said before, if we’re creating a society, then you’ll be helped. But the responsibility in this case should be put on the government. If we look to NGOs, well, they’re just fulfilling the state’s responsibility.”

“The government should finance services and run most of them.”

“NGOs and volunteers are solving problems that the government should actually be solving.”

Government taking active involvement in volunteer movement

In Russia, the government began paying more attention to the general increase in volunteering in the 2000s and took steps to guide its development, and leaders mentioned this activity. The government created an annual summer camp for youth, “Seliger” that brings together thousands of young people from across the country for training in organization, management, culture, technology, the arts, and politics, among other things. Because it is sponsored by the ruling party of Russia, the camp uses the opportunity to communicate the worldview and political views of the government. Volunteer center leaders mention that a number of their volunteers have gone through this training. Another initiative of the government is to provide a national registry of volunteers. Although not legally required, any organizations that utilize volunteers are encouraged to give volunteers the official volunteer booklet and to have them register themselves online. Leaders cite both benefits and drawbacks of this program.

“There has been a change in our country after which the government has paid attention to its [volunteering’s] development.”

“We have a centralized government, everything is at the center, and the central authorities have paid attention to volunteering. Propaganda for volunteering has begun among school children in a rather tough manner, and we’re supposed to fill out a “volunteer book” and register it, if you participate. The initiative is fine, but now the local government is setting goals, and if the leader can’t fulfill them, then he gets worried, and everyone else gets worried.”

“Now it’s even easier to get into university if you have one of these volunteer booklets.”

Another leader mentioned another bill being considered in the Duma:

“In Russia they’re getting ready to pass a law on volunteering where they plan to have government training of volunteers and will support volunteering, but I’m not sure how they will do this. They’ll have to develop a program and finance it. This is a federal law.”

- **Mission of organization**

Volunteer center leaders never mentioned advocacy or advocacy type activities in their narratives, instead focusing on promoting civic involvement and individual development.

“We are a resource center for the development of volunteering and philanthropy. We develop new methods, show how things are done, so that other organizations can do it as well. And we help supply volunteers for other organizations when they have events.”

“We exist to develop volunteering at the institutional and system-wide level. It is like propaganda of volunteering and through volunteering -- it’s like an instrument of personal development and development of civil society.”

“Volunteer center have a somewhat different purpose. They, of course, work with people, but in general they work with specific groups of people, for example young people, or people who come to take part in some kind of initiative. There are people who want self-fulfillment, and the center gathers them and gives them this opportunity.”

“The mission of our organization is also to promote the development of the people, mostly young people, through volunteering. We’re not a place to help people [not a social service organization], but a place for self-improvement. Helping people is just a side benefit.”

- **Focus of volunteering**

When volunteer center leaders described the focus of their volunteering, they mixed the narrative of individual development and societal development. In fact, the focus on individual development was in stark contrast to a focus on fulfilling a social mission, and was so strong that advocacy had no room in the picture.

“We have the approach that volunteering is a tool for development of people.”

“At first it wasn’t conscious, and I didn’t totally understand what volunteering is, but just took part in some events when someone said let’s go with these people and help with something. Now I have a deeper understanding; volunteering is not just helping someone, but it’s helping yourself most of all. Volunteering is not only that you were asked and did something, but it’s personal development, the development of yourself through this activity. In my opinion, this is a good space and a good chance to try something new that you want to do, and volunteering gives you this opportunity.”

“What does the volunteer get? He gets a feeling that he is needed in the world, and also feels joy in doing good, and that brings him hope that all is not so bad.”

Some statements allude back to ideals of Soviet times, in which the citizen was involved in building the nation state, and in return the state took care of the citizen.

“We try to let people know that when they help others, they are helping themselves also.”

“The thing is, until then we need to grow in our understanding that people should contribute to the development of society.”

“People should understand that everyone should participate in taking care of each other. In helping society to develop. This point of view needs to grow.”

In summary, the civic culture framework of volunteer center leaders includes a belief in a strong government that communicates a social vision. The responsibility of citizens and volunteer organizations is to help in the fulfillment of this vision. They expect social change to be guided by the government. Social Service NGOs and volunteers could and should have a place in the structure to fill in gaps, and they should do this with government support. Volunteer Center leaders also hope that an ethos of collective social responsibility returns to the population, and allude to Soviet to the past when talking about this. In conjunction with this civic culture framework, the volunteer center leaders have steered their organizations toward a mission of promoting civic engagement that concentrates on individual development in the service of fulfilling a social vision. They avoid advocacy aimed at government institutions or policy, instead focusing on cooperation with local officials. **In effect, they help to channel volunteering in a safe direction.**

DISCUSSION

Some ideas

Among social service NGO leaders a pattern arises in which volunteering led to a change in civic culture framework which led to social service ngo formation and advocacy which in turn reinforced their new civic culture framework. SSNGO leaders began their volunteering careers with a framework that expects the government to provide social services, but felt that since the country was in a time of transition, they should pitch in and help where they saw gaps. As they were providing services, they began to see structural issues, and due to policy and legal changes, realized that to better serve their populations, they needed to formalize their organization. They registered and became SSNGOs. As SSNGOs they had greater opportunity to interact with government officials and institutional leaders/directors, and saw the opportunity to influence policy and practice. Since they were interacting on the front lines and creating previously non-existent services, they understood that they had valuable experience and a perspective that could contribute to policy discussions. Although SSNGOs hold a very low power position in the system, the leaders of these organizations believe that it is essential for the development of their society that citizen-led organizations and NGOs have a voice in social policy-making. The government should consider these organizations as participating partners.

SSNGO leaders see the Soviet past as playing both a positive and negative role in the trajectory of their organizational development and functioning. They find that the collective mentality and some history of volunteering, even if it was state-directed volunteering, is helpful in people understanding the volunteering that happens in their organizations. However, they find that lack of prior organizational models hinder public and government understanding and trust of NGOs.

Coupled with a lack of understanding stemming from the Soviet past is the reaction of the government to foreign influence in NGO development in the Russian and Eurasian region. This has led to a stricter political climate.

Volunteer center leaders start at a similar place with a framework that expects the government to provide social services, but that citizens should pitch in while the country was in a time of transition. However, they adopted a civic culture framework similar to Soviet times in which the government at the national and local levels is involved in the movement. This has led to a move away from providing any type of social service to a focus on promoting volunteering and emphasizing “self development” of volunteers as a goal. Similar to Soviet times, the government offers youth development camps in the form of “Seliger” and other such retreats for the purpose of training volunteers with a focus on patriotism and loyalty to the government. Since 2005, the government has provided funds to more established volunteer centers to fulfill a goal of starting such centers around the city and in smaller cities in the region. For example, I attended a training weekend with young people from five small cities in the region. These young people were accompanied by either teachers or other employees of the city. The training focused on team building, promoting volunteering, and leadership and organizational development skills. Each city came up with one or two projects that they wanted to do in their city. Volunteer centers emphasize good deeds and short-term projects that improve the community in some way, from having a day of “good deeds” to cleaning a park. In fact, some of the centers are even named “City of Good Deeds.” These centers, whether located in schools or other institutions, are closely linked to local administrators who approve projects and funding. Because of this tight relationship with government officials, volunteer centers shun advocacy.