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The Changing Models of the Russian Third Sector: Import Substitution Phase

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ABSTRACT *This article offers and evaluates a theoretical framework for the appraisal of the third sector's evolution in Russia. Its history in the preceding 50 years is presented as a successive change of three models—latent growth, import-dependent and rooted—each regarded in four dimensions: developmental driving forces, sector structure, dominant organizational culture and relations with the state. The character and change of models are explained proceeding from the demand/supply characteristics of resources and institutions of the sector. Major attention belongs to the rooted model, which is presently taking shape. This versatile and problem-laden process is analysed on the basis of civil society monitoring conducted with the authors' participation since 2006. This analysis reveals rather intensive import substitution of the resources and institutions of the sector and the emergence of prerequisites for its sustainable development. Their implementation depends, however, on the state of the economic, social and cultural environment and requires elimination of some political obstacles.*

KEY WORDS: Model of civil society, import substitution, demand for and supply of institutions, foreign donors, Russia

Introduction

The majority of foreign experts are rather sceptical of late about developments in the Russian third sector (see, e.g. Helsinki Commission, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2008; Social Enterprise, 2008, p. 41). Such evaluations are understandable. Recently introduced state standards complicate third-sector organization (TSO) registration and accounting and thus have sent their operational costs skyrocketing (Auzan & Zolotov, 2007). Organizations closely linked with Western donors have the greatest problems of all, as donors are cutting their grants and officials are sometimes suspicious of such organizations. Importantly, these organizations are best known abroad, and their situation is all too often the principal criterion on which the situation in the entire sector is appraised. Only few authors attempt to cross the limits of the latest developments and evaluate the

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essential developmental trends in the sector since the collapse of the USSR. Their appraisals are mostly rather negative, too. In particular, they note a lack of public desire to get involved in civil affairs, inadequate institutionalization of TSOs, the necessity of personal contacts with key political figures in public groups' relations with the state, domination of the state in the political sphere and dependence on overseas funding (Evans, Sundstrom, & Henry, 2005, p. 305).

Still, if we take a broader view, we do not see a decline. Looking at the Russian third sector without illusions and prejudices, one will recognize the quite contradictory process of its formation. The description of the third sector in Russia in the 1990s as better than one of the late 2000s is like the comparison of a set of independent, unregulated unique handicraft workshops and a broad network of industrial factories. As is typical for any industrial capitalism, this network includes brutal as well as very civilized forms of production; some capitalists have a very close relationship with the state, others suffer from state restrictions. In this respect, the Russian non-profit sector is not very much different from the for-profit one, taking into account the non-profit sector's lower starting point. One does not need to prefer the situation in the 2000s to the one of 1990s; however, an unambiguously negative assessment is hardly adequate in this case. Certainly the same is true with respect to one-sided positive assessments. Instead of censure or apology, it makes sense to identify the *inner driving forces of the sector*.

No doubt, the inner forces of the sector could face favourable as well as unfavourable conditions. For the development of the third sector, the political environment is of highest importance. However, political influence cannot determine all the main characteristics of the sector. Moreover, these characteristics often appear very important, when we study the influence of political regime on the state of civil society. For example, the path dependence of Russian civil society development has limited its ability to consolidate, which, in its turn, played a dramatic role in the sector's performance during the tough period of V. Putin's administration (Sanovich, 2009). That is why we mostly omit the individual cases of political influence on TSOs. Instead, we are interested in the impact of the political environment (as well as other factors) on the basic, long-term characteristics of the sector which will affect its performance even in the case of major political change. Departing from the empirics and people's preferences, we concentrate on those sector functions that are the closest to the everyday needs of the population. Furthermore, for our purposes, the impact of the state on the structure of the sector is more important than the role of the sector in the political sphere (the latter problem has been analysed deeply in the literature; see Sungurov, 2008). Finally, given the rather frequent and significant political changes in Russia, the observer could be prevented from the correct assessment of the state of civil society. In particular, as V. Putin's activity is often claimed to be deadly for the third sector, D. Medvedev's actions could create the expectations of the sector's immediate flourishing. We try to uncover more deep and stable tendencies in the sector. In contrast to the scholars whose primary interest is democratization and for whom civil society as well as a developed third sector is only the way to democracy (see, e.g. Howard, 2003, p. 47), our focus of interest is on the phenomenon of the third sector as such. We appreciate the importance of the 'democratization' approach; however, we try to take a look at civil society from the other, broader perspective.

An opportunity to take a broader view of the situation appeared when civil society monitoring was launched in Russia. Its three rounds (2006, 2007 and 2008) were conducted under the leadership of one of the authors of this article and with the other's participation.

The monitoring included, first, representative public opinion polls on the perception of human rights and their implementation and public activism and participation in TSOs and informal societies; second, opinion polls among TSO leaders and activists on the conditions of TSO activities and their effectiveness; third, opinion polls among school teachers, university professors, researchers, doctors, businesspeople and managers on the problems of their professional communities (the full description of methodology and data are provided in Mersianova and Jakobson (2007a, 2007b)). Municipal policies of supporting and developing public initiatives were also analysed, which included opinion polls among officials responsible for relations with civil society in the regions. The monitoring also included a study of the expert community's role as an interface between civil society and public authority.

The monitoring was conducted by the National Research University—Higher School of Economics with the assistance of Yury Levada Analytical Center, the Public Opinion Foundation, the St Petersburg Strategy Center, the Zadorin Sociological Workshop (CIRCON), the Vox Populi public opinion study centre and other research organizations. The results of the monitoring were partly reflected in the reports of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation (2007, 2008, 2009). The figures below were obtained in the monitoring, with the exception of those whose sources are specified in the text (for a description of the six main survey instruments used, see the appendix).

The vast amount of empirical data may not *allow* one to see the forest for the trees, as a Russian saying goes. This is all the more probable when the young forest is barely rising above the humus left after plants that used to grow on the same spot. To all appearances, what is going on in the Russian third sector can be explained only in terms of formation. The situation must be interpreted in its connection with the past and the future. For this, we advance *three models*, which we conventionally term 'latent growth', 'import-dependent' and 'rooted'. These models are treated as *relatively stable combinations of dominant trends and characteristics* of the third sector, regarded in *four dimensions*: driving forces of development, sector structure, dominant organizational culture and relations with the state. We believe that such an approach is fruitful in identifying the formative stages of civil society not only in Russia but also in other post-socialist and developing countries.

The characteristics of the proposed approach are revealed and its application substantiated in the next section. The two subsequent sections concern the latent growth and import-dependent models. Following the section focused on analysing the rooted model, we provide our basic conclusions.

The Third-sector Institutions: Demand and Supply

Our approach is meant for studying systemic changes during the evolution of the third sector in combination with succession intrinsic in the process. This is why the models we are elaborating have little in common with the 'social origins of civil society' model, advanced by Salamon and Anheier (1998) and its later modifications (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2006). The matter does not concern the difference between comparisons in time and in space only. In Russian history, the political regimes and social contracts are replacing each other so often that there is no stable level of social expenditures or historically determined fixed level of non-governmental activity.[1] The different states of the sector as such do not interest us as much as the factors determining their replacement,

the stability of their present state, their developmental potential, etc. It is worthwhile to structure those factors in terms of demand and supply.

The desire to discern succession in changes makes us put aside the somewhat scholastic argument on whether the third sector and civil society existed in the USSR (e.g. Biddulph, 1975; Uhlin, 2006). If we identify the sector with a sum total of registered non-profit legal bodies, we would have to admit that it came out of the blue as soon as relevant laws were passed. However, the present demand for the institutions of the Russian third sector takes root in the demand for institutionalized self-organization, which certainly existed in the USSR, though it was extremely limited and never met adequate supply. As for the present-day supply of such institutions, it also, to an extent, succeeds the small and peculiar supply that existed in the USSR. So we do not think it expedient to proceed from the purely legal definition of the sector. In this instance, we agree that definitions 'are ultimately judged by their fruitfulness, and the core issue is neither their normative bias nor cultural specificity, however defined, but the way and extent to which they generate knowledge and enhance understanding' (Anheier, 2007).

The article regards the third sector as a total of such *cells of regular and more or less organized human cooperation* as corresponding to the following criteria:

- cooperation has a fairly definite *body of participants* and fairly stable and definite *goals*; the latter are, as a rule, altruistic or pertain to participants' creative self-fulfilment or to collective improvement of their private life;
- at any rate, the goals are not directly connected with obtaining *profit* or with the seizure or exercise of *political power*; so the cell does not directly belong to the spheres of business and the state (nevertheless, the advocacy and policy-promoting groups meet this criteria);
- the cell emerges, functions and disappears on the basis of *voluntary and conscious self-organization*; its entrances and exits are *open*; its membership is not determined by descent (this is why, in particular, families, clans, etc., do not belong to the third sector).

TSOs certainly correspond to these criteria. At the same time, the sector, in the given sense, includes numerous unregistered communities and networks—some of them active in the Internet. The definition spreads, among others, to cells emerging within formal organizations but functioning according to the logic of self-organization, which does not coincide with the interests of those who stood at the cradle of the 'envelope' organization. Further on, we show that this pattern was characteristic of the embryos of the third sector in the moribund Soviet Union.

The layout of the sector in a particular place at a particular time is determined by the *demand and supply* of its *resources and institutions*. The demand and supply of the former are more visible and easier to study than those of the latter. However, the demand and supply of *institutions* are the strongest determinant factors of the types and opportunities of cells, relations within and between them and their relations with the social milieu, including families, the state, business and other cells.[2] We include such heterogeneous phenomena as, for instance, the institutions of recruiting potential participants in voluntary cooperation on the basis of stimuli important to them, the institutions of legalizing cooperation (in particular, TSO registration), the institutions of rule and subordination in the organization, the institutions of funding and resource allocation, of moral support or pressure from the community and the state and much else. Studies of

the evolution of the third sector should concern all those phenomena. However, to make the object observable, it is expedient to reduce reality to models and focus on its most outstanding aspects, which are, we hope, also the most relevant.

The Latent Growth Model

Soviet history (excluding the transition period of Perestroika) can be conventionally divided in two periods—during Joseph Stalin's lifetime and after his death in 1953. The Communist Party was spreading its power and ideological influence on all spheres of life in the first period, and the system began to erode and gradually give room to private life in the second (Zudin, 1999a, 1999b) to offer certain prerequisites for autonomous self-organization. However, Soviet social activism was mainly structured by the state at that time, too. Free self-organization was manifested either as simple mutual assistance in the daily routine or within structures established by the state but left outside its total control or, again, as protest against state actions and the official ideology.

The state displayed interest mainly in quasi-TSOs, which would serve as its transmission belts of a kind. It, however, tolerated niches for voluntary activism in ideologically neutral spheres—such as environment protection, amateur acting, etc.—and occasionally supported and funded them (which did not prevent, for example, the environmental organizations from opposition in some famous cases, like Lake Baikal protection or the Siberian rivers reversal). Nature protection is probably the best case of such phenomenon. Able to keep the traditions of prerevolutionary environmental protection organizations, this movement displayed itself in the post-Stalin era. It managed to recruit in its ranks not only professional scientists (who protect the movement from the ideological accusations by impartial, pure scientific arguments), but also students, artists and journalists, who contributed to the achievement of movement's goals, while not being related to it organizationally (Weiner, 1999). What is interesting about it is that in Russia, like in other post-communist countries (Toepler & Salamon, 2003), the most developed parts of civil society are the ones that were most tolerated by the communist regime: according to the CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Russia, the environmental organizations are the most strong in the Russian third sector at least in terms of the values they promote (Belyaeva & Proskuryakova, 2008). Even communist youth organizations in the countries of the Soviet bloc possessed embryos of genuine self-organization and mutual assistance at the lowest level (see Anheier, Priller, & Zimmer, 2000; Eliaeson, 2006, p. 125).

Institutions formed by communist parties in their own interests partially transformed into institutions of self-organization as the *supply* of such institutions by the *state* met with mounting *private demand* for institutions of altruistic activity, self-fulfilment and collective arrangement of private life. The trend resulted in institutions of a mixed nature, which allowed dual use. On the whole, such institutions were unstable and not very effective—but they provided elbowroom, however small, for the development of the third sector. The state strove to channel altruistic activity into its own. However, state activity of the 1970s and early 1980s was gradually switching from implementing ideological abstractions to attempts to settle real social problems—hence comparative tolerance of dual use. As the result, the Child Foundation, artists' and writers' guilds and some other organizations gradually became tools not only of the state but also of their members and donors. The state eased its grip on religious communities, so they could take up

education and charity, though on a very small scale. Before, all their activities except liturgical ones were considered criminal.

Private persons eventually received ever greater opportunities not only to use niches supplied by the state in their own interests but also to become *subjects of supply* coming from self-organization institutions. Mutual assistance societies and cooperation clubs emerged in rather a large number in sports, tourism, music and other spheres. They were unregistered, for the most part, and felt occasional pressure from the authorities. Many others spontaneously arose within official organizations to use their brands and resources, and spectacularly modified their activity—as, for instance, many grassroots structures of official Soviet trade unions. However, institutions spontaneously organized by the public largely imitated Soviet patterns of organizational culture or, on the contrary, worked in deliberate contrast to them.

The dissident movement was the most active part of Soviet civil society—and the best known outside the USSR (see, e.g. Sakwa, 1998). It was at the greatest distance of all from the ideas and resources of the Soviet state. Active dissidents played an inestimable role in the preparation of political reforms and the later emergence and establishment of the new Russian third sector. It is worthwhile to mention at least dissidents Lyudmila Alexeeva, who became the leader of re-established Moscow Helsinki Group, and Sergey Kovalov, who became the president of the 'Memorial' society after being the first Russian Ombudsman. These organizations played a great role in developing Russian civil society after the collapse of the USSR and provided the local expertise and networks for the foreign aid for Russian TSOs (see The import-dependent model). However, even dissidents largely relied on certain segments of official structures. In particular, they used elements of self-organization and independence that penetrated those structures, as we mentioned above (Pollack & Wielgohs, 2004). More than that, state policy was equally dangerous to all dissidents and thus provided, even despite the state's will, stimuli for extensive self-organization in the dissident milieu (Sakwa, 1998, p. 211). All dissidents had one enemy. That was why ardent proponents of mutually incompatible ideas joined hands—democrats and monarchists, Christian and Muslim fundamentalists, Russian nationalists and fighters for the freedom of non-Russian Soviet republics.

The state's position also brought another result. Almost irrespective of the sphere and goals of self-organization cells, they inevitably clashed with the Soviet system when they strove for autonomy and would not stoop to any compromise. The declining regime put up with trespasses of its monopoly whenever they were masked, however slightly. Those who did not pretend automatically came close to being dissidents. Thus, self-organization cells that rose among, let us say, rock fans or people taking an interest in esoteric doctrines acquired a political colouring even despite their will. That was how none other than state policy gave an impetus to such developmental trends of the third sector that the regime was loathe to see.

Let us now sum up the basic characteristics of the four above-mentioned dimensions:

- The activity of the Communist Party and the state subordinate to it, on the one hand, and spontaneous public response to this activity and its increasing inefficiency, on the other, were the basic *driving forces*. Due to the Communist Party's monopolist control of all resources and institutions, autonomous self-organization was a kind of neoplasm gradually eroding the social organism created by the party. It was, at the same time, dependent on that organism, feeding on its tissues and regenerating them.

- Informal cells dominated the *structure of the sector*. Some of them emerged within state and quasi-state organizations and worked under their disguise.
- The dominant *organizational culture* bore a strong imprint of Soviet bureaucratic culture due to insufficient knowledge of other patterns, close contact of even relatively autonomous cells—in particular, religious communities—with the state and an absence of pronounced borders between many cells of the third sector and organizations within which they functioned.
- *Relations with the state* can be described as close despite the will of both sides. The state strove for unlimited domination while cells of the third sector either used state resources to their own ends or opposed it or, again, combined the two in varying proportions. Environmental protection was one of the few lucky exceptions of mutually beneficial partnership.

It was by no means a sustainable model because it derived from a specific situation of the state, which was anxious to entirely control actions and even thoughts, while it was becoming more and more impotent.

The Import-dependent Model

The change of the political and economic system doomed the latent growth model. For the former western parts of the USSR, mainly the Baltic republics, and former eastern parts, mainly Central Asia, it meant the liberation of driving forces and mechanisms of self-organization partly extant in latent form since the pre-Soviet time. In the western part of the Soviet Union, the trend found expression in a rapprochement with the European variant of the third sector (Ruutsoo, 2002), while the eastern part mainly revived forms of self-organization characteristic of pre-industrial times (Tismaneanu, 1995). In this respect, Russia was unlike the outskirts of the former USSR: advanced modern forms of collective action had not taken firm root there before the Soviet regime was established, while the more archaic forms were uprooted by rapid industrialization and urbanization. Russia had no sufficient experience and legal prerequisites for the third sector to function properly in keeping with the modernized economy and everyday life, with the rather high educational level of the population and the popularity of liberal Westernizing ideas, so characteristic of the early 1990s.

A severe crisis accompanied the establishment of the market economy. The incomes of the majority of the population dramatically shrank, and many had to spend all their leisure time working on the side. The time and money that could be spared for the third sector were thus acutely insufficient. At the same time, the demand for assistance and services that could be provided by the third sector skyrocketed as the state drastically reduced its welfare activity. A few people got rich very quickly with the sweeping change, which implied property redistributed on an unprecedented scale. Success was mostly the lot of people who had no use for altruism and charity. The nascent Russian business world was very tough in the 1990s. Many businesspeople had to pay racketeers and some of them recruited gangsters to bully their competitors—certainly, not a situation for philanthropy.

Sociological studies of that time revealed mass frustration and mistrust. While 56% of respondents trusted others in 1989, only 24% did so in 1995. Confidence eventually

stabilized at 22% (Report, 2007; Yasin, 2007, p. 69). The public mood was certainly detrimental to self-organization. However, the later establishment of the third sector proves that it had social, cultural and economic bases in Russia. Of course, this basis was in a large measure the product of the era of Perestroika and Glasnost. Particularly, the most strong and famous organizations of the Russian third sector of that period have their roots in the period of first steps of democracy in Russia, which were the steps of Mikhail Gorbachev. Exactly at that time, people receive the opportunity to unite legally (at least not illegally) and start to defend their rights and interests.

At the same time, the above-mentioned emerging elements were extremely weak, especially at the start. *Import of resources*, *ideas*, *information*, *work habits and organizational decisions* compensated for this weakness on a tremendous scale.

Available data are incomplete, so we cannot describe the scale, forms and results of such importation in sufficient detail and have to do it by mentioning certain figures. All Russian public associations contributed a total $65.7 million to the GDP in 1997. USAID, the biggest overseas donor, spent $173 million in Russia, and George Soros, the most remarkable of private donors, spent $33 million on charity that year. These figures are certainly not directly comparable as the third sector includes not only public associations, and donor assistance was not limited to this type of TSOs. Be all that as it may, there is an impressive fact—the Russian-oriented budget of only one overseas government agency exceeded almost three-fold the contribution of the most representative segment of the Russian third sector, while one foreigner's donations was equal to half of that contribution.

Donors did not only give money. They transferred to Russia the culture of the Western, mainly American, third sector through activist training, curricula, teaching aids, etc., and in communication with leading Russian TSOs, many of which were established on their initiative.

Organizations outside such influences usually formed quite a different culture, which combined, in varying proportions, elements of the Soviet bureaucratic culture and the Russian entrepreneurial culture of the 1990s. This concerns former Soviet foundations, associations, etc., whose survival largely depended on adaptation to the market demands and morals of that time.

Donations, with their essential importance, directly influenced two salient features of the Russian third sector model of the 1990s. The first concerns activity priorities, and the second is contacts within the sector. Donors were mainly interested, on the one hand, in preventing catastrophes (starting from the elimination of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster in the late USSR), in the broader sense, and in a rapprochement of the Russian public and state with the Western, on the other hand. Therefore, attention was focused on refugees, environmental, HIV and other problems, on the one hand, and on supporting human rights, education, research, the arts and journalism, on the other hand. As for social problems that did not threaten to result in catastrophes, they did not belong to donor priorities, while only the richest Russians could pay considerable attention to leisure and other routine demands at that time, and usually satisfied those demands not at the third sector's expense but with the help of commercial structures emergent in the market.

The 1990s were marked by the domination of *vertical structural links in the sector*—not so much due to the fairly large portion of hierarchically arranged organizations surviving from the Soviet time, as to the routes of imported resources, ideas and behavioural norms. As a rule, such routes stretched from donors to major Russian-based or Russian-localized organizations established with their support or direct participation. These organizations

were distributors and principal centres of the third-sector culture, which was quite new at that time. So, these organizations often looked outlandish. They channelled imports to organizations not so closely linked with donors—in particular, local resource centres. Resources travelled on from there on many occasions. Due to all that, resources and ideas spread widely to influence the entire sector directly or not. Though the foreign donors spent some money for the intrasectoral (between TSOs) and intersectoral cooperation, links that emerged round the import distribution routes were mainly vertical. Though they were surely not administrative, such links often acquired importance and stability.

The state did not play any important part in this model. *Well-wishing non-interference* in third-sector affairs was about the only thing demanded of it. TSOs received only token state allocations. The law meant to open the door as wide as possible to organizations seeking self-determination as non-profit. The supply of legal niches for non-profit activities was made in a way that ruled out stringent and explicit demands of such work. TSOs had to pay for it by putting up with token privileges.

On the whole, we can say that foreign donors were among the principal subjects of third-sector resources and institutions. More than that, their civilizing mission largely formed the demand for supplied institutions. However large it might be, donor influence was far from total. In fact, *two segments* of self-organization were taking shape—the stronger, imported and the weaker, home-made. They were not closely connected with each other. The former was well funded and adhered to civilized patterns of conduct. It, however, focused on priorities largely borrowed from the outside and was not self-sustainable. The latter was badly underfunded and had no sustainable institutions, and so was open to the temptations of commercializing and non-transparency.

As we see it, the model in which the driving forces of third-sector development were on the borderline between Russian and Western society—and so, in a sense, on the periphery of the former—had no alternative at that time. It provided for progress of the sector during its initial period. This model exhausted itself in the early 2000s. Rapid economic growth increased people's incomes, however uneven the process might be. The number of low-income people spectacularly shrank, and the majority of problems which donors focused on to prevent catastrophes lost their edge. Russia acquired considerable domestic resources, while leading donors shifted attention to other countries and regions. All this made many donor organizations reduce the scale of their work in Russia.

More than that, many granters became at that time rather critical of the results of their efforts. Typical in this respect was a report commissioned by the Ford Foundation to assess its own and similar programmes promoting higher education in Russia (Kotkin, 2007). Researchers point out as unsuccessful the system of incentives made by Western foundations, which encouraged TSO activists' and leaders' desire for quick benefits from partnership with donors, rather than for making sustainable and well-established structures (Henderson, 2002). The experience of aid to the Russian third sector seems to be similar (however still more successful) than the Western assistance to ex-communist countries in general. Their mission was not very well thought-out: for example, in the case of education programmes, assistance was provided directly to people instead of institutions; however, it was impossible to keep high standards of work without the institutions that could stimulate such a benevolent behaviour after a donor's departure (Kotkin, 2007). In the case of TSOs, where the creation of institutions received substantially more attention on the part of donors, it means the reliance on a rather small group of

activists, closely related to the donors, which was revealed in the above-mentioned vertical structure of the sector. This was similar to the way of delivering technical assistance to government (Wedel, 2001, p. 85), however, even more dangerous in the third sector, where the result is probably less important than the creation of trust in the process of decision-making.

Failures are explained, in particular, by a discrepancy between overseas foundations' priorities and Russians' problems and values (Sundstrom, 2006, p. 52). Success was the lot of rather rare instances when the supply of support corresponded to expectations of a large section of the public, rather than of a limited number of activists whose circle had taken shape largely through donors' efforts. Success is exemplified, in particular, by the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers, which deal with violence in the army—a problem taken by a great many Russians to heart (Sundstrom, 2005). The results of the TSO leaders' poll in 2007 show that 43% of them believes that the priorities of foreign donors do not match the most important problems of Russian society (only 21.3% thinks the opposite).

Overseas donors made plans to leave Russia and started implementing them as early as the beginning of the 2000s. Their intentions were stimulated by unfriendly attitudes of the Russian authorities to politically active overseas foundations in the middle of the decade, after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Be that as it may, many major donors reduced or utterly gave up their work in Russia. Thus, the DFID (UK Department for International Development) and the Open Society Institute closed their offices in Russia, while the USAID office almost halved its budget in current prices within the decade.[3] In the 2007 poll, 26% of TSO leaders stated that foreign resources were important for the development of the Russian non-governmental sector in the 1990s (while 24% are of contrasting opinion). For the 2000s, 20% of respondents consider foreign resources as important (while 32% are of contrasting opinion).

Of course, the foundations have not left Russia completely; they still finance many TSOs. However, even in terms of funding, their influence fell sharply in comparison with the 1990s. In terms of ideas, it is doubly true. As they left, donors advised the Russian TSOs most closely connected with them to switch to domestic sources. However, the Russian state and private philanthropists were usually unwilling to go on with programmes launched by foreign donors.

The import-dependent model was thus short-lived in Russia. But, despite all its drawbacks, we should not underestimate its positive role. Modern sector institutions were brought to the Russian soil within it, and personnel capable of maintaining such institutions were trained. At the same time, the model had no guarantees of resource sustainability and no considerable public support in Russia.

In his 1996 article, Quigley wrote:

> The future success of democracy promotion efforts would benefit from [among a number of factors] more local involvement, not only at the implementation stage, but also at the design and, most important, the evaluation stages. In addition, independent foundations should seek some form of local co-financing for their activities and freely adapt project structures to enhance the role of local partners. (Quigley, 1996, p. 118)

As we can see below, these issues really become determinative in the next period. Let us now review the basic characteristics of the import-dependent model.

- Principal *driving forces*—foreign donors' activity. They formed the supply of a major part of resources and of the most effective institutions. More than that, their policy of priority setting partly substituted for the domestic demand and indirectly determined the demand by sector activists connected most closely with donors. At the same time, there were both domestic demand and domestic supply of sector resources and institutions independent of donors. This demand and supply was, however, unbalanced. Success was achieved, as a rule, when the vectors of forces generated outside and within Russian society coincided.
- The *structure of the sector* was a sum of two segments rather unlike each other in terms of resource provision and institutional arrangement. The import-related segment was usually better organized and funded, more transparent, possessed the better-qualified personnel, etc. Many TSOs were in between the two segments.
- The two segments also differed in their *organizational culture*. TSOs closely connected with Western donors tried to reproduce their behavioural standards, relations, etc., with the utmost accuracy, while the other segment mostly reproduced the patterns of the Soviet bureaucratic practice or of nascent Russian business, which was not given to fair play at that time.
- *The state* was mainly indifferent to the third sector, and TSOs formed their strategies without giving much thought to state policy. But then, TSOs, as almost all in Russia, had to reckon, to varying extents, with corrupt bureaucrats' selfish interests. The bureaucrats, however, mostly avoided pressuring organizations closely connected with overseas government agencies or major Western foundations. At the same time, certain organizations of the 'home-grown' segment took an active part in corruption.

The Rooted Model

The economic and social upheavals of the 2000s made it possible to *replace external sources of demand and supply in the sector with internal ones*. To be sure, together with the dramatic decline in the foreign aid due to political pressure on the foreign donors, suspicions of supporting disloyal TSOs and change of their regional priorities, it drastically changed the nature of both supply and demand and the results of their interaction.

We can assess the scale of change, for instance, from the rise of the average monthly wage. According to the Russian Statistical Agency, it grew from $62 in 1999 to $688 in August 2008 (the growth is more than 10 times; however, the growth of price rates is only three times), and exceeded $1200 in Moscow (and earnings are higher than wages). A massive middle class is emerging, able to create a social basis for the third sector. The middle class (in terms of income and social-professional status; in terms of people's self-identification) accounts at a minimum for 22% (or 30 million people), according to the Independent Institute for Social Policy (Maleva, 2003, p. 432). At any rate, tens of millions of people live a life that has become, as never before, comparable to typical conditions of the middle class in economically developed countries.[4]

The majority of the population is tired of politics, and at the same time, government measures restricted political competition, which resulted in a shift to private life. According to a Russian economist Auzan (2006), the social contract in 2000s implied the exchange of part of citizen's rights and freedoms for a higher level of welfare.

Respondents of a 2008 representative poll for civil society monitoring were, in particular, to choose the five constitutional rights that mattered most to them (Table 1).

As Table 1 shows, social rights such as the right to work and to free medical aid are clearly more important for people than the political and civil ones such as the freedom of assembly and the right to vote. Such is the public mood, even though respondents consider rights 'of low importance' protected less, on the whole, than rights regarded as top priorities.

Extensive social groups' interests are still inadequately reflected and articulated, and the self-organization potential clusters mainly around local improvements of the daily routine. Answering the 2008 survey on what problems public and other non-profit organizations should concentrate in their city/village, respondents most often mentioned local beautification (26%), drinking (25%), environmental problems (18%), drugs (17%), dissolution of morals and aggression (17%), unemployment (15%) and scarcity or inaccessibility of cultural, entertainment and sports facilities (15%). A mere 6% mentioned authorities' arbitrary action, corruption and inactivity, though whatever number of variants could be chosen in the answer. The reason lay not in indifference to those phenomena (on the contrary, the same opinion poll showed many concerned about them) but in the public assessment of the mission and potential of the third sector.

The same is evident from the 2008 assessment of the comparative judgement on the various types of TSOs (Table 2).

Structural characteristics of the third sector (to the extent to which present-day statistics, with all their imperfections, reflect them) correspond more or less to such preferences. Social services (33%), education (23%), health care (5%) and the work of professional guilds and unions, as well as property management, are the most widespread TSO activities according to a number of organizations with such primary activity in 2008

Table 1. Russian people's rights and freedoms, in order of importance in 2008 (% of respondents who consider that as important/enjoyed)

Rights and freedoms	Important	Enjoyed
Right to work	54	56
Right to free medical aid	50	50
Right to social welfare services for the elderly	44	42
Right to free education	35	40
Right to life	35	29
Right to own property	35	26
Right to social assistance during the ailment	32	26
Right to well-paid professional work	29	25
Right to defence from illegal arrest and torture	18	21
Right to express own opinion, freedom of speech	15	19
Right to free movement inside the country (without registration)	14	16
Right to information	13	14
Right to appeal to authorities and receive an answer	11	12
Freedom of religion	8	10
Right to vote and to participate in the management of state affairs	5	10
Freedom of information dissemination by any means	3	8
Right to create TSOs and associations	2	8
Freedom of assembly and rallies	1	8

Table 2. People's attitudes regarding TSO's public benefit

Type of TSO or initiative	% of respondents who consider it of social utility
Charitable organizations for refugees, the homeless and other persons	32
War veterans associations	30
Disabled persons associations	29
Charitable initiatives (public fund-raising for medical aid and etc.)	29
Protection of consumers' rights associations	27
Philanthropic foundations	21
Trade unions	19
Athletic, travel, motorists, hunting associations	17
Associations of suburban summer home owners	16
Environmental organizations	16
Cultural, local, cultural initiatives and clubs	15
Human rights organizations	14
Condominiums	12
Women's organizations	9
Community association	8
Parents' associations	8
Community committees (at the apartment block)	7
Religious communities, organizations and movements	6
Student governments and other students associations	6
Professional associations	5
Local initiatives defending their social rights	5
Youth political associations	4
Ethnic communities	3
Youth non-political associations	3
National-patriotic movements	2

(Rosstat, 2009). If we examine only public associations, we will find that the most widespread among them are trade unions (33%), religious (13%) and professional (9%) associations.

The majority of organizations are very small. According to the 2007 opinion poll of TSO leaders, 33% of registered organizations have no hired employees, another 35% have a staff of 5 or less and 23% employ 6–10 people. Volunteers are absent in 28% of TSOs, and another 25% have only up to 10 volunteers. At the same time, 10% of TSOs have more than 100 regularly working volunteers each, according to their leaders.

Be all that as it may, rather many Russian citizens not only demand third-sector services but also *altruistically supply their resources*. The 2007 monitoring survey showed that 72% of respondents provided free assistance to the needy in the preceding year. Each spent on average 16 h a month on such work. In the last year, 33% of respondents donated money; however, two-thirds of them cannot afford to donate more than $10. Online philanthropy is developing rapidly. However, according to 2006 data, 85% of philanthropists were working on their own, though more than a half of them preferred collective action. This is one of the many manifestations of a considerable *lag of effective third-sector institution supply* behind resource supply.

Furthermore, 49% declare readiness to spend more on charity if they were sure the money would be used according to the intended purpose, while 33% do not know who

and through whom they can help. More important is only the lack of money for charity (64%) and time for volunteering (23%) (see Mersianova & Jakobson, 2007a, p. 33).

The main obstacles to third-sector development seem to be trust-related and informational. Forty-four per cent of respondents had the least possible information about local consumer leagues, 49% about veteran organizations, 44% about limited-abilities persons' organizations, 33% charity services, 18% charity foundations, 28% environment protection organizations, 23% rights protection organizations, etc.

Lack of confidence in people and TSOs is the most profound obstacle to the increase of supply. We might compare the above figures concerning rather widespread free assistance activity with the 2008 distribution of respondents' opinions of whether people are inclined to help each other. A mere 21% gave positive replies to this question. The 2008 opinion poll showed an overwhelming majority think that disunity dominated contemporary society. However, 52% of the respondents said that accord and team spirit reigned in their own milieu, while 55% of respondents said they were willing to join hands with others who shared their ideas and interests. So, as we see, a typical Russian combines his own positive experience with an assumption of others' negative experience—a self-contradictory opinion.

The 2008 poll showed that communities based on simple mutual understanding are more topical for a majority than associations based on social, ideational and political interests (Table 3). In other words, present-day people want to unite mainly for leisure and to cope with elementary routine problems.

Table 3. Responses to the questions: 'Whom would you like to unite with to solve shared problems and protect mutual interests?' and 'What likeness matters most to you in this instance?' (% of respondents)

People of/likeness	
Peer	32
Similar situation	25
Similar character	22
Shared neighbourhood	18
Similar cultural level	17
Shared hobbies	15
Similar job	15
Similar income	13
The same settlement	13
The same trade or profession	13
Similar educational level	11
Nobody	*10*
Fellow countryman	10
The same ethnicity	10
Similar marital status	10
The same gender	9
Participation in social life	7
Do not know	*7*
Any co-citizen	6
The same religion	6
Shared political orientations	5
The same job level	4
The same place of education	3

The public attitude to social activity and TSOs is rather contradictory. In 2007, 40% think that socially active people are generally disliked, while 36% are of contrasting opinion. At the same time, about a half of respondents said they would like, under particular conditions, to take part in TSO campaigns and social initiatives, while about a third said they were willing to volunteer for such organizations or make donations. Many doubt, however, that TSOs are true to their mission. This scepticism is one of the major obstacles to participation. According to the 2006 poll, 47% of respondents thought that some organizations engaged in commerce in TSO disguise.

On the whole, these facts allow us to conclude that now, unlike in the recent past, many Russians are *potentially ready to be involved in the third sector* not only as beneficiaries but also as donors and volunteers. In other words, a soil has appeared for the sector to take firm root in. For that, prejudice has to be overcome, an information infrastructure of involvement has to be established and, what matters most, sector institutions have to be notably improved. The latter largely depends on the stances of actors—mainly the state and corporations—able to contribute more to the supply of resources and institutions than average members of the public.

Russian business has lately, for the most part, shifted from the primary accumulation phase to productive use of national assets. Corporations care about their reputation much more than they did, and sincere altruism is ever more manifest. The demand of business, especially big, for TSO activities is growing. The *business world* is supplying *third-sector resources* and partly *institutions* on a large scale. Corporate charity is much greater than private in terms of money. According to published data, charity expenses account for 8% of total expenditures in Russian companies, against 1% in American (Polishchuk, 2006). However, the situation is rather contradictory. A greater part of corporate donations go not to TSOs but to social projects of governmental authorities, mainly regional and local (Polishchuk, 2006). This aid is largely motivated by the desire to improve relations with those authorities, and often by pressure from them.

At the same time, really independent and civilized large charity organizations are emerging in Russian business circles—suffice it to mention the Dynasty and Victoria Foundations. Such organizations possess big money and trained personnel. This is possible as certain Russian TSOs offer much larger remuneration than foreign donors—something that would sound preposterous until quite recently. Such activity suffers a lot from the lack of legal conditions for its development. In particular, the absence of tax breaks hampers charitable spending on the part of businesses and rich individuals. The misuse of the tax breaks for charity in the beginning of the 1990s has dramatically affected the state's willingness to stimulate charity in this way. Meanwhile a new concept of state aid to charity development was adopted in July 2009, which promises some positive changes in the future.

Business circles are also considerably superior to other population strata in establishing powerful organizations to express their members' interests—among them the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the Business Russia Association, the OPORA organization of small and medium business, the Russian Banking Association and numerous sectoral and regional associations. Authorities maintain permanent dialogue with them and often take their initiatives into consideration even though the influence of business on the arrangement of political priorities is now considerably lower than it used to be 10 years ago.

Meanwhile the activity of business is limited in the areas which are considered by authorities as politically sensitive (like the support of human rights TSOs), which especially

became clear after the well-known 'Yukos affair' and the imprisonment of the owner of 'Yukos' Mikhail Khodorkovsky, one of the results of which was the liquidation of his large philanthropic foundation 'Open Russia'. Under these conditions, the expansion of the scale of TSO operations during the years of rapid economic growth has substantially less touched the human rights TSOs. Most of them remain rather small organizations, able to deal with only a small portion of cases of people's rights infringement.

As for the *state policy* towards the third sector, attempts are made both to rule the sector and to promote activities of TSOs, unless they are close to the political opposition. For instance, some tax abatement for TSOs and donors is being prepared, while financial control and the registration procedure are toughened, as we said in the beginning (Auzan & Zolotov, 2007). To all appearances, on the whole, the current policy is characterized by the desire to turn the third sector into an ally in solving social problems and, at the same time, prevent its politicization. This desire was manifested in establishing the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation. Positioned as a collective representative of civil society, it, however, appeared on the state's initiative, and the President of Russia appointed its first members, who later elected others on TSO nominations. Prominent researchers, doctors, priests and TSO activists are typical members of the Chamber. They are not afraid to harshly criticize authorities for particular moves, but only very few of them belong to the political opposition, and most of them support the current authorities.

At the same time, politically committed TSOs that criticize the current political system face obstacles to their activity. Many of them are the objects of financial claims; others were the objects of frequent inspections. Some organizations that suffered under this pressure decided to stop their activity. And the desire to turn the third sector into an ally also has some negative aspects: sometimes they mean ally as a (financially or other type of) dependent organization. For the TSOs with the double service and advocacy function, it means the development of the former at the expense of the latter.

The state has begun allocating sizeable budget sums to support the sector. Several TSOs have received presidential grants since 2006, when approximately $20 million was allocated. Allocations reached $50 million a year later and $63 million in 2008. About a third of such allocations went to projects of low income and socially vulnerable people's relief, another third to promote youth initiatives and healthy living and close to a quarter to cultural and educational projects and research on civil society. Slightly more than 10% went to human rights projects and public legal education. Such a structure of resource allocation reflects the goal to make the TSOs a helping hand in solving Russia's main social problems, though an attempt to turn at least a part of human rights TSOs from opponents into allies also is made.

Civil society monitoring shows that the majority of respondents demand greater state support of TSOs. The 2008 survey shows that 45% of respondents think that the state should provide beneficial conditions for and make allocations to *all TSOs that really help people* and 31% to *all TSOs that are harmless to the community*, while 23% are sure that such conditions must be provided for *all TSOs without exception*. Indicatively, the leaders of the majority of TSOs say they expect assistance mainly from local and regional authorities.

The respondents' opinions of the *character of TSO relations with the state* are of interest. In 2008, the most popular answer was mutual ignorance; cooperation on an equal basis was recognized only by 10% of people (Table 4). However, the majority spoke for *equal partnership* of TSOs and the state while demanding TSOs *protection of public interests*.

Table 4. Responses to the question: 'How do TSOs now interact with the authorities?' (% of respondents)

Mind their own business and avoid contacts with authorities	23
Use authorities for their purposes	18
Defend peoples' interests against authorities	12
Cooperate with authorities on equal basis	10
Assist the state	8
Oppose authorities	2
Do not know	39

The respondents were rather critical of the state policy towards the third sector in 2008, though about a half found it hard to make explicit judgements (Table 5).

The environment in which TSOs work is formed by the attitudes and conduct of the population, business and the state. It remains rather complicated, on the whole. A mere 12% of TSOs, judging by an opinion poll among their leaders, can afford to implement all their initiatives, while about 50% cannot implement them in full, though feeling sustainable enough. The rest have economic problems, and 17% of TSOs involved in the poll were on the verge of closing. Only 4% of organizations said they were receiving allocations from overseas or international donors. An incomparably larger number of TSOs receive grants from various state sources, while membership fees, service fees and Russian corporate donations are basic sources of income.

TSOs need not only money for successful work. Though their leaders say material hardships are the worst of their problems, many experts also point to their internal problems—such as, for instance, the pressing problem of attracting the youth and the succession of activist generations, which all too often cannot be settled to sufficient effect (Marchenkov, 2007). The problem of management is also acute. Judging by available information, a greater part of TSOs is not yet inclined to transparency and responsiveness towards their constituencies. Organization leaders are often authoritarian and uncontrollable, and boards of trustees usually play a nominal part. This trend could not develop in organizations that were strongly dependent on foreign donors. Paradoxically, the end of dependence has reduced internal democracy in the activities of some organizations.

This 2007 information indirectly shows public attitudes to the substitution of imported third-sector resources and institutions, which, as we see it, are a salient feature of the current change of model (Table 6).

Table 5. Responses to the question: 'How do public authorities now treat TSOs?' (% of respondents)

Promote development	15
They are indifferent	14
Try to impose control	12
Try to help and cooperate but do not know how to do it	12
There is a large gap between the declared and real policy on TSOs	11
Try to cooperate as an equal partner	10
There is no stable policy regarding TSOs	5
Try to annihilate independent initiatives	4
Do not know	*39*

Table 6. Responses to the question: 'What do you think about the TSOs, which obtain finance from…?' (% of respondents)

Source of financing	Positive	Negative	Do not know
State funds and state enterprise	66	9	25
Religious associations	41	28	32
Russian business	61	12	27
International organizations (UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc.)	59	11	30
Foreign private and independent philanthropic organizations	40	26	34
Foreign governmental organizations	38	28	34

Source: Mersianova and Jakobson (2007a, p. 54).

One-third of people have no defined opinion on the social utility of different financial sources. And no more than one-third of respondents are strictly against any source (the least popular are foreign governments and churches).

At the same time, 44% of respondents think that foreign TSO activities in Russia should be limited to varying extents, while 24% are of the opposite opinion. In the 2007 poll, 27% of TSO leaders consider the role of foreign donors as positive both in the 1990s and 2000s (against 20% and 18% who consider it as negative in the respective decades). The leaders of foundations and the TSOs founded in the early 1990s are more in favour of the foreign donor's role. The political influence of foreign donors is evaluated with greater scepticism: it is marked only by 16% as positive in the 1990s (while 36% are of contrasting opinion). For the 2000s, the picture is the same. Also leaders of foundations and the TSOs, which were founded in the early 1990s, judge the foreign donors more positively. The prejudice against foreign donors can be partly explained by the campaign of accusations that was conducted by major Russian TV broadcasters after the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine. However, there is another reason too: some kind of maturation syndrome that includes a psychological break with the former mentor.

The latest tendencies in the development of the Russian third sector are related, on the one hand, to the economic crisis, and, on the other hand, to the revision of the authorities' position on TSOs. In particular, the new Russian president D. Medvedev has not only recreated the Council on Human Rights and Development of Civil Society Institutions, but also for the first time included in it several tough critics of the current Russian political regime and his own political decisions.[5] Moreover, on the first meeting of the council in April 2009, the human rights activists were invited to participate in the revision of non-profit laws. The first aim was stated as the repeal of the negative consequences of the 2006 odious amendments to these laws. In July 2009, the appropriate legislative amendments were adopted. Of course, the significance of these events should not be overestimated. Only the future will show how these trends will develop and how the economic crisis affects the Russian third sector. However, the former as well as the latter is hardly able to change the basic features of the rooted model.

Anyway, the change of model is *not over* yet: the import-dependent model is gone, while the new model is only taking shape. The results of this process will depend on many factors including economic dynamics, income distribution, cultural shifts and state policies, both home and foreign. As far as we can judge by current developments, a model is emerging that has a firm root in contemporary Russian life with all its benefits

and ills, path dependency and developmental potential. The final features of this model have not become fixed yet, though we can see the following visible tendencies.

- Altruistic aspirations and public (especially middle class) and business self-organization, emerging from below, are the basic *driving forces*. Apart from that, a considerable part is played by the policy of public authorities, who are eager, on the one hand, to attract partners in solving social problems and, on the other hand, to prevent opposition political activity of TSOs.
- *The structure of the sector* is characterized by the predominance of small and economically weak TSOs, whose activity is dominated by solving social problems. Affluent and rather effective organizations are at the same time established by corporations and their proprietors.
- The *organizational culture* of TSOs is extremely diverse at present. In each instance, such culture largely depends on the origin and contacts of the organization. Some TSOs proceed from foreign models borrowed in the 1990s, others from bureaucratic patterns of the state machinery and still others from the experience of for-profit corporations, while some have a bizarre mixture of cultures. Strong leadership and weak influence of the ranks and constituencies are, perhaps, the most common features of all. To all appearances, the dominant organizational culture of the new model is not yet determined, which eloquently indicates that the model is only in the making.
- Third-sector *relations with the state* are quite diverse. Most TSOs (especially service providers) though are becoming more and more inclined towards partnership based on accepting each other the way they really are—a trend approved by the public majority. However, there are parts of the third sector that experience acute tensions with authorities and are under pressure from them.

Conclusions

For the first time since 1917, the Russian third sector is ceasing to be a planet whose orbit is determined by the gravity and repulsion of outer luminaries, be it the state or foreign donors. The major actors of the sector have until now regarded it mainly as a *resource* for achieving *external* goals, rather *distant* in time. In the Soviet years, the goal was the construction of communism for the state and its loyal subjects and change of regime for dissidents and their sympathizers. In the 1990s, the most active subjects of the sector aspired, in the final analysis, to transform Russian society along Western patterns, and donor policies were largely oriented towards this goal. True, both eras also knew many instances of self-organization indifferent to such ambitious goals and aiming to settle routine problems. However, they did not determine the sector and its dominant trends until quite recently.

Now, the Russian third sector is ever more open to initiatives of the most diverse kinds, whose participants want self-fulfilment and altruistic work in the *existing situation*. To be sure, self-fulfilment implies efforts to change the situation to many of them. However, these are mostly changes that can be made within the limits offered by the present-day state and society. Unlike in the recent past, these limits are most often regarded today as the Russian climate, which has few admirers but in which we have to live. This is certainly a vulnerable position, yet it allows the third sector to discover all kinds of niches and become a sphere in which varied not-for-profit activities coexist.

On the one hand, this position allows the third sector to develop different niches and become the area of coexistence of non-profit activities of all sorts. On the other hand (and this is in focus of many observers), this makes the sector very adaptive to, sometimes, not the best circumstances. According to Schmidt (2006), 'Empirical research shows with certainty that contemporary Russian civil society (. . .) [is] developing and during this process it creates a sophisticated complex of original mechanisms that allow it to adapt to specific Russian circumstances' (p. 19). Admittedly, in accordance with the idea that the rooted model reflects all successes and defects of Russian society, as it was established in the mid-2000s, this feature is the direct extension of the adaptive behaviour of individuals, as noted by many observers (about the adaptive attitudes of Russian people, see Dubin, 2008).

Adaptive behaviour, beyond doubt, creates risks of conservation of all the present characters of Russian political and social life. At the same time, in the long run, it is probably even more risky to postpone the development until better times. The only chance for the sustainable success of any positive political change is the pre-existence of a developed third sector, rooted in broad population strata. Civil society's ability to represent real people's interests and provide voice for ordinary people could play a great role in Russian development. However, to play this role, it needs a net of strong organizations and social movements, deeply rooted in Russian society. Therefore, the gradual yet steady creation of such a net, even though most of its elements are currently concentrated on the immediate people's needs and are remote from politics, inspires certain optimism.

Notes

1. Probably, in cross-national comparison, this level could be identified and would be rather low. But in the context of Russian history over the last half a century, it has changed very appreciably and for the purposes of this research could not be taken as fixed.
2. The term 'institution' is understood here the way it is treated by institutional economics (e.g. North, 1990).
3. If we consider the fall of the purchasing power of the dollar in the Russian market, the budget was cut by four to five times.
4. Empirical data and its analysis in this paragraph are on the pre-crisis period. The world economic crisis reached Russia relatively late, in the second half of 2008. The empirical study of its consequence for the Russian third sector is only at its starting point.
5. It makes sense to note that both presidents Putin and Yeltsin preferred to keep the open opponents at arm's length.

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Appendix

We use two main sources of sociological data (all the others are explicitly stated in the text).

The source for people's preferences is four related opinion surveys, conducted by the National Research University—Higher School Economics and the Public Opinion Foundation in the second half of 2007 and 2008. The first is called 'Public activity and the people's participation in NGOs and informal associations'. The number of respondents was 3058. The second is called 'The people's perception of their social and political rights, the conditions for their realizations, the role of civil society in it and the measures for support of civil society'. The number of respondents was 3064. The third included 1600 respondents, while the fourth included 1500. Both of the latter two surveys included questions devoted to people's perception of the state of civil society in Russia. The surveys were conducted on the basis of a stratified random sample of people who live in 200 Russian cities, towns and villages in 63 regions.

The source for the TSO leaders' opinions is two opinion surveys, conducted by the National Research University—Higher School Economics and the Public Opinion Foundation in the second half of 2007. The first is called 'The non-profit sector as civil society institution in Russia' and covered 1057 leaders of TSOs. The second is called 'The non-profit organizations in the institutional environment of civil society and the state' and covered 1054 leaders of TSOs. The surveys were conducted on the basis of a stratified random sample of all types of TSOs in 32 Russian regions (different in terms of their economic development and political environment).