

Nonprofit Influence on Public Policy: Exploring Nonprofit Advocacy in Russia

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Abstract

This article examines the advocacy tactics of Russian nonprofits. While Russian nonprofits and their activities have been widely researched, specific insight into their use of advocacy tactics remains limited. In this article, we address this gap by broadening the understanding of how Russian nonprofits engage in advocacy. To do so we engage both Mosley's indirect/insider framework and qualitative data collected from health and education nonprofits (HENonprofits) in three Russian industrial regions. We demonstrate that Russian HENonprofits, while having access to various advocacy tactics, fail to use them effectively. They are instead used for organizational maintenance and case/client advocacy. In conclusion, we discuss a potential typology of advocacy tactics in Russia, the usefulness of Mosley's framework in this context and the implications of the failure to advocate for democratization within the Russian Federation.

Keywords

nonprofit advocacy, policy influence, democratization, Russia

Following the transition process after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has retained a mix of democratic participation and authoritarian rule (Wegren & Konitzer, 2007). This means that Russia's *brand* of democratic governance or managed democracy (Wegren & Konitzer, 2007) limits the scope of nonprofit activity and thus impacts the ability of organizations to engage in activities aimed at

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influencing public policy—generally referred to as advocacy. To shed light on this issue, we illustrate the nature, type, and use of advocacy tactics by Russian nonprofits in the health and education sector: a sector hitherto relatively neglected in the study of Russian civil society (Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2014).

The focus on health and education nonprofits (HENonprofits) offers specific insight into an area which has seen government failure (Weisbrod, 1978)—the retreat of the Russian state from its social responsibilities (Sil & Chen, 2004)—with the burden falling on HENonprofits to plug the gap (Rivkin-Fish, 1999). The health sector in particular has seen increased demand for services related to drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, and HIV/AIDS: areas in which Russian practices are said to be lagging behind global best practice (Titterton, 2006). Furthermore, Iarskaia-Smirnova and Romanov (2002) conclude that resource allocation and social service-provision by the Russian state suffers from inertia. Given the lack of democratic accountability within a system of managed democracy (Wegren & Konitzer, 2007), it is advocacy by HENonprofits which could provide important impetus for necessary changes in this area of public policy. Therefore, we ask how Russian HENonprofits advocate in this context. In so doing, we address Almog-Bar and Schmid's (2014) recent call for a more nuanced understanding of advocacy in different contexts. To do so, we structure the article as follows. We first outline the literature on nonprofit advocacy, followed by an overview of factors affecting advocacy activities of Russian nonprofits. We then describe the research study from which the findings in the article derive and present its findings. To conclude, we illustrate the limitations of the study and outline the contributions the article makes.

Nonprofit Advocacy Activities

We understand advocacy as the “expressive function” (James & Rose-Ackerman, 1986, p. 9) or the voice of nonprofits. By this we mean their ability to gain *access* to the relevant institutions or individuals and the *capability* to influence them (Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2014). Hence, advocacy can be seen as “the term generally used to describe efforts to influence public policy” (Boris & Mosher-Williams, 1998, p. 488) and thus to effect changes in the nonprofits' operating environment (Frumkin, 2002; Moulton & Eckerd, 2012; Suarez & Hwang, 2008). Similar to other contexts, public policy in the Russian Federation is understood as the principles, policies, and practices implement by state power (Wheeler, Unbegaun, Falla, & Thompson, 2000). Advocacy therefore turns nonprofits into active governance actors (Chaskin & Greenberg, 2013): nonelected representatives for their constituency or the public (Mosley & Grogan, 2013). Consequently, the objectives of nonprofit advocacy activities are wide ranging and can include agenda setting, influencing long-term priorities, and/or resource allocation (Andrews & Edwards, 2004). In addition, Mosley (2012) observes that nonprofits engage in advocacy activities when policy restricts their ability to deliver services, use advocacy to build partnerships *with* the state and its agents, to secure funding, and/or share/promote their expertise. A vital part of nonprofit advocacy activities also relates to lobbying, the attempt to directly influence legislation or legislative

developments (Suarez & Hwang, 2008). Both advocacy as well as its subset of lobbying activities are shaped by the regulatory context faced by nonprofits (Kerlin & Reid, 2010).

In this article, we focus on service-providing nonprofits for whom advocacy is often a secondary activity (Van Til, 2009). These organizations, due to the nature of their funding arrangements, are often in a good position to access policy makers (Mosley, 2010; Moulton & Eckerd, 2012). For many such nonprofits, advocacy is a crucial support activity (Van Til, 2009). Even though service-providing nonprofits will have fewer organizational capabilities than their advocacy specialist counterparts (Andrews & Edwards, 2004), their engagement in advocacy is often crucial to achieve both their long-term objectives (Suarez & Hwang, 2008) and to create spaces for social engagement.

Service-providing nonprofits chose to engage in advocacy for either social benefit, for example, often associated with lobbying in the public interest, or organizational benefits, for example, advocacy for organizational maintenance and/or survival (Duer & Mateo, 2013; Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2014; Mosley, 2012; Suarez & Hwang, 2008). Nicholson-Crotty (2009) finds that advocacy can often lead to costly retribution against nonprofits by hostile ruling and governing elites, including the withholding of resources. In turn, this means that service-providing nonprofits have to carefully balance their social justice and public interest goals with their service-providing activities (Sanders & McClellan, 2014; Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2009). We now turn to look in more detail at potential advocacy tactics used by service-providing nonprofits.

Nonprofit Advocacy Tactics

Mosley (2011) states that nonprofits can engage in advocacy that is indirect and/or insider focused. Indirect tactics are used when nonprofits advocate without directly participating in the policy-making process. Hence, indirect tactics are targeted at engaging the public and influencing the public discourse. Indirect advocacy activities may include “writing letters to the editor, working with advocacy coalitions, issuing policy reports, and conducting a demonstration” (Mosley, 2011, p. 441) or utilizing social media outlets (Guo & Saxton, 2014). The mobilization of the public is key to indirect tactics and thus such tactics are more conducive to advocate for issues which have a wider social benefit (i.e., benefit the broader public (Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2014)).

Conversely, where nonprofits use their personal connection to influence public policy, Mosley (2011) describes this as *insider* advocacy or tactics. *Insider* tactics rely on the nonprofit’s capability to directly interact with ruling and governing elites. This interaction can take place in a formal, institutionalized setting such as public hearings or committees or informally through personal meetings (Mosley, 2011). To operationalize *insider* tactics nonprofits not only require direct access to state institutions but also to individuals embedded within ruling and governing elites. These sort of advocacy activities are more conducive to ensuring organizational maintenance (Duer & Mateo, 2013; Mosley, 2012).

In a democratic context, nonprofits seek a balanced combination of both indirect and insider tactics to advance their advocacy objectives. In this way, they are able to engage with multiple governance levels (Beyers & Kerremans, 2012) and raise both public awareness (indirect tactics) and increase direct participation (insider tactics; Mosley, 2012). Lobbying activities, for example, require this sort of balance of tactics (Suarez & Hwang, 2008). Furthermore, in strengthening their advocacy work nonprofits often use political ties (Beyers & Kerremans, 2012), establish advocacy networks (Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld, & Dowell, 2006) join specialized umbrella organizations (Balassiano & Chandler, 2010; Kraemer, Whiteman, & Banerjee, 2013), or bolster membership (Schmid, Bar, & Nirel, 2008).

However, these insights into nonprofit advocacy behavior assume that such organizations operate in an environment within which a political culture of public participation and pluralism exists. This is not the case in the context of the Russian Federation (Titterton, 2006). Yet, understanding nonprofit advocacy in such a context is important for a number of reasons. First, nonprofit advocacy reflects their capability to influence public policy and monitor government behavior (Andrews & Edwards, 2004). Second, advocacy reflects the institutionalization of public participation in the political process (Meyer, 2004). Third, advocacy ensures nonprofit survival by facilitating access to resources (Mosley, 2012). Nevertheless, little is known about the availability, motivation, and use of advocacy tactics in managed democracies and thus warrants further attention.

The Russian context therefore provides an interesting venue within which to explore advocacy tactics. To provide some context, we shortly summarize the literature of Russian civil society development. In so doing, we draw on Salamon and Anheier's (1998) suggestion of considering a variety of contextual influences that shape the social space available for nonprofit activity and action.

A Constricted Social Space: The Advocacy Potential of Russian Nonprofits

The space in which Russian nonprofits operate is still informed by its Soviet antecedents. During the Soviet Union, there was no independent "third sector" as open dissent and public protest was prohibited. Instead, Russian society split into two halves, ordinary citizens in one, using ties of friendship and family to hedge against the vagaries of central planning, while elites—factory controllers, senior apparatchiks, and party members—used similar ties to gain favors, obviate rules, and consolidate their position and occupied the other half (Mishler & Rose, 1997; Rose, 2000). Thus, strong ties existed within these groups, but there was no sector to bridge the space between the two. This fostered mistrust particularly from citizens toward elites. The result was a constriction of Soviet social space.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, this constricted space remained intact. Elites operationalized their ties to secure control of the newly privatized sector, while ordinary citizens used their ties to hedge against the uncertainties of shock therapy, privatization, and mass state withdrawal from social services (Mishler & Rose, 1997;

Rose, 2000). At the same time, organizations like the ones making up the environmental movement which had been so instrumental in taking advantage of the political opportunity of perestroika for mass protest (Tarrow, 1988; Weiner, 2002), splintered into a myriad of small and single issue organizations competing for resources (Crotty, 2006), no longer capable of engaging the public in this way.

In addition, factors emerging from within the new Russian state further impeded nonprofit development. First the public rejected volunteering in formalized settings as a reaction to forced participation in public life during the Soviet period which meant that nonprofits have difficulties in recruiting volunteers (Howard, 2002); second, as a result of Russia's constricted social space legacy, nonprofits are parochial and inward looking resulting in a lack of public participation and support for organizations (Crotty, 2006; Spencer, 2011). Third, nonprofits were unsuccessful in developing domestic funding channels relying on foreign support directed at activities without public support (Henderson, 2002). Finally, informal relationships in the Russian Federation remain important (Ledeneva, 2006). As stated above, the nature of central planning necessitated the forming of strong informal relationships, either to access resources or to retain your elite position. Informal relations thus constituted a vital aspect of everyday life in the Soviet Union (Mishler & Rose, 1997) and remain an integral part of political and business life in the Russian Federation (Ledeneva, 2006). However, nonprofits are often characterized as being outside these networks with organizations missing informal relations and their associated links (Ljubownikow, Crotty, & Rodgers, 2013), as well as opposition and hostility toward nonprofits has impeded the development of insider advocacy. In addition, legislative changes since 2006 have limited political opportunities (Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2014; Tarrow, 1988) to engage or bridge the gap between the public and the Russian elite.

The Putin/Medvedev administrations have implemented stricter regulation affecting nonprofits, which include rules on the use of funding (Maxwell, 2006), classifying nonprofits assessed as politically active (e.g., those engaging in advocacy activities) and receiving foreign funding as foreign agents (Bennetts, 2012). In addition, large fines for unofficial demonstrations have also been introduced (Bryanski, 2012). Alongside these developments, the Russian state has also promoted regional Civic Chambers (*Obshchestvennaya palata*) as the main channel for nonprofit-state interaction (Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2010).

Civic Chambers are government initiated structures meant to encourage scrutiny of public policy making and public administration (Richter, 2009). They are also responsible for the allocation of government funding to nonprofits. Furthermore, the Civic Chambers also organize regular roundtables and committees for invited nonprofits to raise and discuss their issues (Richter, 2009). However, the invited nature of the Civic Chamber (most members are appointed by ruling and governing elites; Richter, 2009) and its monopoly on access to state authorities have a potential restricting effect on the advocacy activities of nonprofits. Thus, legislative, cultural-historic, and organizational factors shape a constricted social space for nonprofit advocacy activity. Tarrow (1988) asserts that for political opportunity to occur, nonprofits or social movements need one or a combination of shifting alignments, or division within elite groupings

and influential allies, particularly in nondemocratic settings, that can protect them from elite response. Within Russia's constricted social space, even if political opportunities arose, nonprofits appear to be both without allies and the state has already signaled the nature of its response to nonprofits seeking to take advantage of any such opportunity—ultimately limiting political opportunities therein.

Despite these negative indicators, there are some recent examples where nonprofits have engaged in effective advocacy. This includes criticism of regulatory changes impacting nonprofits (Alekseeva et al., 2005) leading to legislative amendments. Javeline and Lindemann-Komarova (2010) also highlight a positive advocacy experience of nonprofits coming together at a regional level forcing the re-routing of a planned oil pipeline around Lake Baikal. Nonprofits have also been successful in case advocacy and supported individuals in bringing litigation charges against businesses and local councils through the Russian court system (Fröhlich, 2012). However, these examples contrast strongly with the wider literature on Russian nonprofits which overwhelmingly indicates that such organizations have limited advocacy potential (Crotty & Hall, 2013).

Thus, drawing on the wider and general literature on Russian nonprofits, we would expect that Russian nonprofits are likely to have underdeveloped or constrained advocacy opportunities. To explore this, we focus on Russian nonprofit engagement in activities of an advocacy nature (including lobbying) and how nonprofits understand and utilize these activities. Before presenting our findings, we first provide an overview of our research study.

The Research Study

To date, most of the understanding of nonprofits in the Russian context has been informed by the study of such organizations in Moscow and St. Petersburg (Javeline & Lindemann-Komarova, 2010). With the experience of organizations in provincial Russia differing, we base our study in the Russian cities of Perm, Yekaterinburg, and Samara. These three cities are representative of Russian cities located in industrialized-provinces, which have a significant defense sector and are over 80% ethnic Russian (Federal State Statistics Service, 2010). We choose these three urban areas as study sites for HENonprofit advocacy, because they are the location of the respective regional authorities and in provincial Russia it is urban areas where Russia's middle class resides and is traditional associated with more nonprofit activity (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). Thus, these cities provide the study with a relevant as well as sufficiently similar context to examine HENonprofit advocacy and minimizing potential regional factors to act as explanatory influences (Miles & Huberman, 1999) enhancing transferability of our insights (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

HENonprofits were purposefully selected (Siggelkow, 2007) based on their activities and objectives to fit with the study's focus on health and education. Furthermore, we also drew on organizations' own categorization as to whether they defined themselves as nonprofits in the Russian Federation often known as *obshchestvennyy organizatsii*, which translates into social or public organizations. Data was collected via a

semistructured interview protocol. This protocol was informed by the advocacy literature and literature on Russian civil society development (a selection of the questions asked were what projects/activities organization do, what factors impact their work, whether they engage in advocacy, what they consider advocacy to be, and which of their activities they associated with advocacy) and allowing respondents to provide a narrative of their organizations *modus operandi* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Such an approach enables us to capture the respondent's own interpretations (Eisenhardt, 1989) assisting us in evaluating how respondents understand and characterize the activities of their organization.

Reflecting Spencer's (2011, p. 1080) observation of Russian nonprofits, most HEnonprofits in this study were also dominated by "democratic centralism," where the leader's ideas are automatically adopted by full member consent. Thus, the leader's response represents the most relevant opinion to organizational decision making. Therefore, interviews were conducted in Russian with leaders of nonprofits lasting on average 45 min. To reduce the risk of self-reporting bias in the interview, these data were triangulated during the coding and analysis process with observational and artefactual data (such as flyers, pamphlets, published material, and other publically available information) collected by attending HEnonprofit events. The appendix provides an overview of the organizations in this study, their activities, and a proxy measure for size.

To protect the confidentiality of respondents, their responses and organizations were anonymized using acronyms. For analysis, all interviews were transcribed and translated into English in situ, calling on the skills of native speakers wherever discrepancies arose. Documents and artefactual data, if the latter contained textual content, were also translated into English. Akin to open coding, inductive coding started with reading and rereading interview transcripts, documents, and other textual data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This process led to the emergence of codes, which were then grouped, into emerging themes. This thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006) led to themes centered on the activities of nonprofits, whether respondents defined these as entailing advocacy, and how organizations understood and organized any advocacy activities they saw themselves engaging in. Themes were then assessed for common patterns and/or differences and Mosley's (2011) definition of indirect and insider advocacy was used to organize data points.

To ensure coding reliability and reduce ambiguities, the codes and themes were discussed with field experts during and after the coding process. All interview data were cross-checked against observational notes and data artefacts which also assisted to establish relationships between different parts of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1999). In this process, we also compared whether the narratives and discourses by respondents differed based on geographical location. Although there were some differences in narratives (for example in Perm respondents made more references to incidents of indirect advocacy tactics but they mainly described the activities of other none service-providing organizations rather than their own), our aim was to establish an overarching narrative illustrating the challenges and issues Russian HEnonprofits faced in a constricted societal space rather than capturing organizational or regional

variances. We present our analysis by drawing on the practices of reporting narrative enquiry outcomes where the aim is to highlight how respondents make sense of their own world (Bruner, 1991). Thus, we present the narrative constituting the emergent themes using “illuminating examples” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 240) from the interviews to exemplify key points.

Findings

Indirect Tactics

Mosley (2011) suggests a variety of activities that can be characterized as indirect advocacy tactics. However, the activities Mosley describes require the mobilization of the public—a capability Russian nonprofits lack (Crotty, 2009). Despite this, HENonprofits in this study did illustrate that they “[wrote] letters to the social protection department” (Respondent 50, Org02Yek) or are “writing a complaint” (Respondent 38, Org13Per) on behalf of their constituents. HENonprofits also illustrated that they wrote letters for specific individuals who would approach them directly for assistance. This was not done as part of a planned advocacy campaign but instead part of the organizations case advocacy approach. If these letters were ineffective however, HENonprofits appeared to capitulate stating that they “never go to court” (Respondent 48, Org23Per) or followed up failed complaints. Other indirect advocacy tactics were absent from the respondents’ narratives or their use was rejected. Respondent 32 captures the attitude toward demonstrations present in all the narratives captured by this study.

The authorities turn away from them [organizations which engage in demonstrations] and mainly cooperate with us. Events such as going on to the street and shouting give us this, give us that, we do not do this. We do not want conflict with the authorities or the government. (Respondent 32, Org08Per)

Similarly, respondents stated that “I do not like working through demonstrations at all” (Respondent 48, Org23Per), or did “not do big actions and activities like that [demonstrations]” (Respondent 52, Org04Yek). Hence, in addition to the historic lack of organizational capability to mobilize the public and the public’s apathy to engage with nonprofits (Crotty, 2006), HENonprofits viewed demonstrations or direct protest action negatively. HENonprofits perception of elite response (Tarrow, 1988) meant that participation in such events was viewed as resulting in antagonizing a state that had already constrained nonprofits’ social space. Thus, HENonprofits actively rejected the participation therein.

Furthermore, demonstrations and other indirect advocacy tactics required organizations to collaborate with others in for example advocacy coalitions or umbrella organizations (Balassiano & Chandler, 2010). Although HENonprofits did note that they cooperated on for example “organizing a roundtable” (Respondent 47, Org22Per), this interaction was described as “helping us mainly morally” (Respondent 6, Org06Sam) or downplayed as unimportant “[it is] not really cooperation, it is more an exchange of

ideas” (Respondent 50, Org02Yek). When the narrative on cooperation was explored further, HEnonprofits indicated that “there is no love or friendship lost” (Respondent 27, Org03Per) between organizations. They also portrayed other HEnonprofits as “competitors” (Respondent 6, Org06Sam; Respondent, 27, Org03Per; Respondent 49, Org01Yek) rather than partners for a common cause or a member of the same social movement. In pitting one group against another, the foreign funding regimes of the 1990s (Henderson, 2002) have contributed to this resistance to collaborate. With competition now for state funding still in place, this is unlikely to change.

The experience of Russian HEnonprofits suggests that they perceived the majority of indirect advocacy tactics available to nonprofits (see Mosley, 2011) as not relevant. The politicization of nonprofit advocacy activity by the state via regulation and targeted organizational inspections (Earle, 2013) has dis-incentivized HEnonprofits from using indirect advocacy tactics. Thus, HEnonprofits also saw no need to involve or mobilize the public. This combined with the absence of advocacy coalitions deprived HEnonprofits of leverage vis-à-vis ruling and governing elites. It seems that the constricted social space in which HEnonprofits exists limits the use of indirect advocacy tactics and requires them to utilize insider advocacy tactics.

Insider Advocacy

As illustrated above, insider tactics were not associated with specific activities, but were instead delineated by the ability of nonprofits to directly access ruling and governing elites (Mosley, 2011). For example, Mosley (2012) considers access based on personal relationships as providing a crucial platform for insider advocacy. HEnonprofits in this study illustrated several direct access opportunities to ruling and governing elites. HEnonprofits sought to “participate in all meetings, committees, roundtables, conferences that are organized by the government” (Respondent 29, Org05Per). Reflecting the importance of personal ties (Mishler & Rose, 1997), respondents also highlighted that they could use connections such as “university friends or friends I made around that time” (Respondent 79, Org30Yek) to gain access to these meetings. However, most pointed out that to participate in these meetings you needed to be “invited” (Respondent 61, Org12Yek). In addition, engagement in such events was often a one-off and did not allow HEnonprofits to develop an outlet for more systematic insider advocacy tactics. Thus, HEnonprofits were aware of the need to “move away from one-time events” (Respondent 64, Org15Yek) as part of developing regular access to ruling and governing elites. As a result, a number of HEnonprofits (Org01Sam, Org07Sam, Org18Sam, Org02Per, Org05Per, Org11Per, Org12Per, Org02Yek, Org12, Yek, Org15Yek, Org30Yek) indicated that they had tried to get elected to the regional Civic Chamber. A place in the Civic Chamber would provide consistent access to the regional ruling and governing elites.

HEnonprofits were aware that they participate in “manipulated structures” (Respondent 61, Org12Yek), and that these are not “initiatives [that] come from the ground up” (Respondent 33, Org09Per). Nevertheless, this access enabled HEnonprofits to become “friendly with the government and lets them know we exist” (Respondent

64, Org15Yek). Thus, insider advocacy was seen less as a way of influencing decision making by ruling and governing elites but as an opportunity to promote “ideas” (Respondent 16, Org17Sam), “where you should speak your mind” (Respondent 64, Org15Yek) or “approach the authorities with a problem” (Respondent 48, Org23Per). However, HEnonprofits were also aware of elite response (Tarrow, 1988) and that the scope of topics that could be discussed within the Civic Chamber was limited because “you will not be re-invited if you raise something they do not like” (Respondent 50, Org02Yek).

Thus, HEnonprofits in this study did not engage roundtables and committees for insider tactics. Instead, they were seen as “a good way for the government to tell us about [upcoming] changes to the law” (Respondent 10, Org10Sam) or “try to know what the government wants to do or wants us to do” (Respondent 29, Org05Per). Insider tactics were not viewed as a way to shape the governing and ruling elites policy agendas. Hence, HEnonprofits viewed roundtables or other meetings as an opportunity to establish working relationships with the state via “helping [to] build personal relations” (Respondent 50, Org02Yek). Even though this is a vital component of insider tactics (Mosley, 2011, 2012), HEnonprofits in this study did not portray such emerged relationships in this way. Instead, these relationships were more useful for day-to-day activities as they facilitated “solving problems that we face when we want to do an event” (Respondent 79, Org30Yek). Thus, as respondent 60 outlines, HEnonprofits were motivated to engage in these roundtables or committees so that they “will be able to tell the relevant person without the Civic Chamber” (Respondent 60, Org11Yek), rather than using the direct access offered by the state as part of their advocacy tactics.

Using advocacy tactics: Case advocacy. As illustrated above for HEnonprofits in this study, advocacy was also not about influencing policy but a way of accessing information for dissemination among their constituencies (clients as well as members) or providing a service. In so doing, advocacy was viewed as “enlighten[ing] people about their rights” (Respondent 54, Org06Yek).

Thus, understanding of advocacy was markedly different from how advocacy is defined in the literature or understood in mature democracies (Boris & Mosher-Williams, 1998) where such activities are aimed at promoting a common or aggregate interest (Andrews & Edwards, 2004) or organizational maintenance (Mosley, 2012). Moreover, in our study, advocacy was done for individuals. Organizations in all three regions therefore saw advocacy not as a way of promoting change at a policy level but as “help[ing] individuals solve their problems” (Respondent 60, Org11Yek; Respondent 14, Org15Sam; Respondent 29, Org05Per; Respondent 32, Org08Per).

The fact that advocacy was focused on the individual rather than shaping public discourse is no doubt an outcome of the constricted nature of HEnonprofits operating environment. It might also suggest that HEnonprofits lack the necessary organizational capacity to engage in influencing at the policy level. However, HEnonprofits in this study stated that advocacy at the policy level at the municipal or regional level bore little fruit because “it is very difficult to change the situation

for the better on a regional level (. . .), because decision are made in Moscow” (Respondent 42, Org17Per). In addition, Respondent 12 described the sentiments of others in highlighting that governing elites at the municipal and regional level lacked the willingness to engage with nonprofits and thus enable their participation in policy making.

During the Soviet Union, HEnonprofits did not do any advocacy work and I think such stereotypes are still there [amongst the ruling and governing elites]. (Respondent 12, Org12Sam)

This perceived lock out at the regional and municipal level explains why HEnonprofits in this study focused on advocacy for individuals to assert their social rights. In turn, this meant that HEnonprofits only engage in advocacy type activities that would not get them into trouble with ruling and governing elites, and thus limited harmful elite response (Tarrow, 1988). Consequently, advocacy activities for individuals had become part of the services provision HEnonprofits offer to their constituencies. The lack of narrative with regard to participation in more systematic ways to influence policy is, however, worrisome as it means that interest representation within Russia’s ailing welfare sector remains underdeveloped (Cerami, 2009). This service-based approach to advocacy allows low level individual grievances to be smoothed out, without presenting a challenge to the overall authority of ruling and governing elites. It also means that current nonprofit advocacy has limited scope to drive democratization.

Conclusion

In this article, we examine how Russian nonprofits advocate. In so doing, we answer Almog-Bar and Schmid’s (2014) call to add nuance to the understanding of advocacy in different contexts. Little has been known about the availability, motivation, and use of advocacy tactics in managed democracies and our article sheds some light on these issues. Russia’s managed democratic context and cultural-historic heritage provide an insight into nonprofit advocacy tactics.

In this article, we used Mosley’s (2011) framework of indirect and insider advocacy tactics to structure respondents’ narrative on the nature and use advocacy activities. Our evidence indicates that this framework is simplistic in describing the complicated contextual factors affecting Russian nonprofits’ choice of advocacy activity. Thus, the respondents’ discourse shows an awareness of a wide variety of indirect advocacy activities available. Although Mosley’s framework is useful in providing an initial description of indirect advocacy, it does not account for the constrictedness of the context in which Russian HEnonprofits operate and the limited choice of actual advocacy activities available. These choices are limited because HEnonprofits fear antagonizing the state and a negative elite response or retaliation (Tarrow, 1988). Retaliation could be proactive such as unannounced organizational audits (Earle, 2013), blacklisting which restricts a nonprofit’s ability to access funding from domestic sources, or

passive with ruling and governing elites ignoring organizations and subsequent loss of access. Hence, Russia's managed democracy demonstrates that in a socially constricted context, nonprofits face a more complex and nuanced consideration when making choices about advocacy and attempting to balance service-provision objectives and social justice goals (Sanders & McClellan, 2014; Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2009). Therefore, in extending Mosley's framework to the Russian case where societal space for nonprofits is constricted, we need to establish the subcategory of *limited indirect advocacy tactics*.

Another key aspect of Mosley's (2011) framework is the use of insider advocacy tactics. Given the importance of personal relationships in Russian society, nonprofits require such access to open up areas for action and democratization. In this context, access to ruling and governing elites is controlled by the state. In effect the Russian state controls access to personal relationships, ensuring that most of the power remains rooted within ruling and governing elites.

This has resulted in a pragmatic response by Russian HENonprofits, who see institutionalized access points not primarily as opportunities to influence but opportunity to build or maintain personal relationships to facilitate organizational maintenance or case/client advocacy. In the Russian setting with constricted societal space for nonprofit activity, we have to refer to *institutionalized insider advocacy tactics*, thus adding a subcategory to Mosley's (2012) insider tactics. Such *institutionalized insider advocacy tactics* also mean that organizations are reluctant to cooperate with each other as access is limited and thus competitive. Our evidence suggest that organizations perceive that those nonprofits winning such access take a more pragmatic and less confrontational approach to ruling and governing elites which limits engagement in indirect advocacy activities.

Mosley (2011) states that nonprofits engage in advocacy via both indirect and insider tactics and although this suggest that organizations might need to consider the trade-off engaging in one and not the other, the assumption of this consideration is based on the potential effectiveness of the various tactics. This also assumes that consistent opportunity for advocacy exists and that organizations have the skills to engage in advocacy and advocacy choices are about tactical effectiveness. However, the context of the Russian Federation highlights that organizational consideration about trade-offs focused less on tactical effectiveness and more on organizational survival. Although *limited indirect advocacy tactics* encouraged HENonprofits to involve the wider Russian public and give vulnerable sections of society a voice, *institutionalized insider advocacy tactics* facilitate organizational survival and their ability to provide services to these groups. Our insights show that HENonprofits felt that it was better to have some interaction with the state and its institutions even if it is controlled, licensed, and directed by ruling and governing elites, rather than no involvement at all. They trade-off indirect advocacy tactics. Interaction means that the state was aware of HENonprofits existence. This constitutes a positive development because in the past ruling and governing elites were altogether ignorant to the existence of nonprofits (Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010). In the longer run, human service nonprofits may be able to leverage this attention by influencing public policy and government behavior

(Andrews & Edwards, 2004) and contribute to the democratization process or widen public participation in political processes (Meyer, 2004).

The conclusions drawn here do need to be seen in light of the limitations of this study. A larger sample, different methodological approach, different sectors and regions may have led to different reactions and narratives and are avenues for future research. Despite these limitations and the article's focus on only two specific types of organizations in three Russian regions, our findings show a strong relationship with the extended literature on civil society in Russia (Crotty, 2009; Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010; Spencer, 2011).

Our results also suggest that the recently observed success of advocacy activities (Fröhlich, 2012; Javeline & Lindemann-Komarova, 2010) remain singular events and are not yet evidence of the development of an active advocacy culture among all types of Russian nonprofits. The narratives of respondents indicate that HENonprofits both fear elite response as well as lack the relevant capacity or organizational culture, that is, their understanding of advocacy as only a case based activity, to take full advantage of available, albeit institutionalized, advocacy opportunities. Hence, nonprofit advocacy activities in this context remains constricted (Crotty & Hall, 2013). Our evidence suggests that in a constricted civil society space advocacy tactics need to be classified as *limited indirect* and *institutionalized insider*—rather than just indirect and insider. It also highlights that Russian nonprofits are pragmatic creatures who have adapted their available advocacy tactics to their context.

Appendix

Organization	Date, membership/staff	Main objective
Org01Sam	1991, 8 S	Civil society development
Org02Sam	2001, 1 S	Promoting educational techniques
Org03Sam	2007, 6 S	Charitable programs
Org04Sam	2000, 2 S	Educating volunteers
Org05Sam	1992 (1918), ca. 3000 M	Youth programs
Org06Sam	1991, 2 S	Deaf education
Org07Sam	2003, ca. 20 M	Disability support
Org08Sam	2000, 3 S	Folklore education
Org09Sam	1997 (1993), 3 S	Legal education
Org10Sam	2001, 60 S	Drug addiction and HIV/AIDS support
Org11Sam	2002, 3 S	Language education
Org12Sam	2003, 100 M	Assisting families of Down Syndrome children
Org13Sam	1998, ca. 15 M	Healthy lifestyle promotion
Org14Sam	(1924-1933) 1987, 5 S	Humanitarian aid for children
Org15Sam	1999, 7 S	HIV/AIDS support
Org16Sam	2005 (1988), 2 S	Disability support
Org17Sam	1998, 23 S	Disability rights
Org18Sam	1985, 5 S	Healthy lifestyle promotion

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Organization	Date, membership/staff	Main objective
Org19Sam	2005, ca 4 S	Organizing youth exchanges and volunteers
Org20Sam	2007, 3 S	HIV/AIDS support
Org21Sam	1992, 3 S	Children's rights
Org22Sam	1999, 3 S	HIV/AIDS education
Org23Sam	1998, 1 S/ca 10 M	Child health promotion
Org24Sam	2000, ca. 60 M	Assisting the families of autistic children
Org01Per	1999, 3 M	Drug rehabilitation and education
Org02Per	1868, 12 S	Health services
Org03Per	1999, ca 20 S	Disability employment
Org04Per	1995, 6 S	Promoting and organizing Paralympic sport
Org05Per	1938, 38 S	Advocacy for the blind
Org06Per	2006, N.A.	Youth education
Org07Per	1993, 4 S	Disability rights
Org08Per	1926, 22 S	Advocacy for the deaf
Org09Per	1997, N.A.	Disability rehabilitation
Org10Per	1998, 4 S	Promoting children's rights
Org11Per	1992, ca 18 S	Running museum and human rights education
Org12Per	1998, 4 S	Human rights education
Org13Per	2000, 60 M	Disability rights
Org14Per	ca 1997, 70 M	Assisting the families of autistic children
Org15Per	1994, 50 M	Hospice
Org16Per	2005, 10 M	Election monitoring and democracy education
Org17Per	2006, 4 S	Drug rehabilitation
Org18Per	1996, 16 S	Assisting Nonprofits with marketing and legal advice
Org19Per	2005, 9 M	Housing rights education
Org20Per	2003, 20 M	Citizenship education
Org21Per	1994, 11 S	Health rights education
Org22Per	1998, 3 S	Supporting and implementing social projects
Org01Yek	1988, ca 15 S	Disability rights
Org02Yek	2003, 5 S	Supporting new mothers
Org03Yek	ca 2005, 1 S	Disability rights
Org04Yek	1999, 1 S	Disability rights
Org05Yek	ca 2000, 5 S	Respite care for the families of disabled children
Org06Yek	2001, 10 S/M	Healthy lifestyle promotion
Org07Yek	2001, ca 5 M	Disability rights
Org08Yek	2002, ca 30 M	Disability rights
Org09Yek	ca 2000, 20 S	Drug rehabilitation
Org10Yek	1996, 0	Disability rights—dissolved
Org11Yek	2000, 7/8 S	Children's rights
Org12Yek	1918, 10 S ca 7000 M	Advocacy for the blind

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Organization	Date, membership/staff	Main objective
Org13Yek	1998, 1 S	Aid to children in poverty
Org14Yek	2004, 1 S	After school education
Org15Yek	2003, 20 M	Disability rights
Org16Yek	1999, 22 S	Providing support to families of those with HIV/AIDS
Org17Yek	1995, 2 S	Organizing special Olympics
Org18Yek	2002, 9 M	Learning disability rights
Org19Yek	2007, 6 M	Education for peace
Org20Yek	1992, 32 M	Support for children's homes
Org21Yek	1999, ca 30 M	Respite for the families of children with cancer—dissolved
Org22Yek	1992, 8 S	Disability rehabilitation
Org23Yek	1996, 2 M	Assisting for children with disabilities
Org24Yek	1998, 3 S	Education of deaf children
Org25Yek	1999, ca. 10 S	Student's rights education
Org26Yek	1992 (1918), ca. 17 000 M/ca 25 S	Youth education activities
Org27Yek	1988, 5 S	Disability rights
Org28Yek	1961, 4 S	After school clubs
Org29Yek	1998, ca. 40 S	Drug rehabilitation
Org30Yek	2003, ca. 450 M	Support MS sufferers
Org31Yek	2004, ca. 3 S	Migrant rights education
Org32Yek	2005, ca. 20 S	Disability rights education
Org33Yek	2000, 1 S	Addiction education

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