The Influence of Civil Society Activism on Regional Governance Structures in the Russian Federation: A Cross-Regional and Policy Comparison

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Analytical Framework
3. Participation of NGOs in regional ethnic policy
4. Participation of NGOs in regional social policy
5. Participation of NGOs in regional environmental policy
6. Conclusion
7. Bibliography

1) Introduction

In recent years, new laws about non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been adopted in the Russian Federation in order to restructure the interactions between state and non-state actors. These normative acts caused controversial discussions about the relationship between state and civil society actors in Russia. While many academics feared that these laws would obstacle civil society activism, others argued that these normative acts were necessary to provide the legal base for NGOs as a new type of actors in the policy arena, thus, giving them the opportunity to participate in the policy making process.

In their arguments, both sides recurred to different concepts of democracy, which reveals the divergent understanding of democracy. In order to avoid normative debates, we analyze

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1 This paper compares the findings of three independent research projects on Russian regional governance, which are currently realized within the PhD program “New Modes of Governance in Eastern Europe” at Heinrich-Heine University of Dusseldorf (Germany).
4 In a commentary to the above mentioned amended laws V. Putin underlined, that „political activity in Russia has to be as transparent as possible“. http://www.gipp.ru/opennews.php?id=9916
contemporary Russian civil society and the interaction between civil society and state actors within the framework of governance distinguishing between market, network and hierarchical governance. With the help of case studies, we analyze how state and civil society actors interact in order to formulate and implement policy.

Our cases are drawn from environmental, social and ethnic policy in the Krasnodar, Irkutsk, Perm, Nizhnyi Novgorod and Stavropol regions. The common methodological approach is controlled comparison with a most similar case design. The data are collected in field researches via interviews and document analysis.

In the following chapters, we present short descriptions and analyses of our cases and the main findings of the separate case studies. We argue that there are several active civil society actors in all regions and policy fields under scrutiny. State actors are engaged in negotiations with NGOs, first, because they need NGO resources in order to solve problems and, second, because NGOs are powerful enough to seriously hinder state actors. On the other side, negotiations mostly occur in networks, which are defined as semi-permanent relationships of resource exchange (Knoke et al. 1996). Because of its informality, boundaries of the networks are not transparent. This gives state actors the possibility to involve only loyal NGOs into the decision making process and thus, to simulate broad inclusion of civil society representatives. It became, moreover, obvious that laws and regulations are not always implemented due to vague formulations or intentional noncompliance.

2) Analytical Framework

The Concept of Governance

There are various definitions of governance, which may be classified according to whether they define the governance in a broad or restrictive way (Bähr/Treib 2007). ‘In the encompassing sense it (governance) implies every mode of political steering involving public and private actors, including traditional modes of government and different types of steering from hierarchical imposition to sheer information measures’ (Heritier 2002: 185). In the restricted sense governance entails only ‘types of political steering in which non-hierarchical modes of guidance, such as persuasion and negotiation, are employed, and/or public and private actors are engaged in policy formulation’ (Heritier 2002: 185). Our research project draws on the broad definition of Arthur Benz, which defines governance as “steering and co-ordination of interdependent (usually collective) actors based on institutionalized rule systems” (Benz 2004:
25). The use of the broad definition reflects the possibility that in the Russian Federation the traditional mode of hierarchical direction might be the main or only mode of governance.

**Modes of Governance based on Actor-Centered Institutionalism**

There are equally many various conceptions of what should be considered different modes of governance (for an overview see Bähr/Treib 2007). One conception of modes of governance evolves from the analytical framework of actor-centered institutionalism, developed by Mayntz and Scharpf (Mayntz/Scharpf 1995, Scharpf 1997). The actor-centered institutionalism „treats policy as the outcome of the interactions of resourceful and boundedly rational actors whose capabilities, preferences, and perceptions are largely, but not completely, shaped by the institutionalized norms within which they interact” (Scharpf 1997: 195). Drawing on the analytical framework of actor-centered institutionalism, they model the modes of governance according to the underlying mode of interaction and the institutional settings, which enable these modes of interaction.

Institutions, according to Scharpf and Mayntz, are defined as rules that structure social interaction by constraining and enabling actors (Scharpf 1986: 39; Mayntz Scharpf 1995:45). Institutions can be formal and informal. Formal institutions are rules that are created, communicated, and enforced through channels widely accepted as official. This includes state-enforced rules (constitutions, laws, regulations), but also the official rules that govern organizations such as corporations, political parties, and interest groups. By contrast, informal institutions are socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels (Helmke & Levitsky 2004: 727). Violation will be sanctioned by loss of reputation, social disapproval, withdrawal of cooperation and rewards, or even ostracism (Scharpf 1997: 38).

According to Scharpf and Mayntz, there are three modes of interaction\(^5\): unilateral adjustment, negotiation and hierarchical direction. The institutional settings required to enable the interactions are for unilateral adjustment at least the minimal institutions of the market, for negotiations networks and for hierarchical direction the institutional setting of organizations (Mayntz/Scharpf 1995). These modes of interaction differ considerably in their qualitative characteristics (Scharpf 1997).

*Hierarchical steering* is able to solve coordination and cooperation problems in an effective and efficient manner. However, drawbacks of hierarchical steering are according to agency theory information- and motivation problems, which mean that the decision maker does not have the

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\(^5\) The case study “ethnic policy” distinguishes according to Scharpf 1997 majority vote as a fourth mode of interaction.
required information about the object of its decision and even if he has enough information it is questionable whether his decisions aim at enhancing welfare of those in which name he is taking the decisions.

*Unilateral adjustment* on markets mobilizes decentralized information and provides for the incentives to fulfil targets. Moreover, unilateral adjustment as well as hierarchical direction does not involve high transactions costs. Disadvantages of unilateral adjustments are, however, externalities and incentives for free riding.

*Negotiations* can solve the problems attributed to unilateral adjustments and hierarchical steering. When there are no transaction costs negotiations among rational actors will lead to voluntary agreements to solve externalities (Coase 1960). Negotiations also provide for information and can reduce, thus, information and motivation problems. Drawbacks of negotiations are high transaction costs, which can render them unfeasible. However, network relationships minor the problem of high transaction costs, by reducing the risk of opportunism by the longer “shadow of the future” and the higher visibility of transactions to relevant others (Scharpf 1997).

All together, each mode of governance – unilateral action in minimal institutions, negotiations in networks and hierarchical direction in organizations – has significant drawbacks questioning the state’s capacity to provide goods and services in an efficient and effective manner. However, combining various modes like hierarchical direction and negotiations can enhance state capacity.

The combination of traditional hierarchical governance and network governance with non-state actors becomes ever more necessary in order to provide state functions, because in modern societies the information and, thus, the motivation problems are growing constantly. The need for network governance does certainly not halt at the frontier of the Russian Federation. Thus, our hypothesis is that state actors in Russia are interested in forms of negotiations within networks with civil society representatives in order to enhance state capacity to solve problems. Thereby, both state and non-state actors try to cooperate with those they consider powerful. Due to the different political contexts in the various regions and policy fields the policy networks, however, will differ considerably.

**Operationalization**

The scope of our research project is, first, to examine the hypothesis and, second, to analyse how does network-governance – if it does exist between state and non-state actors – differ among the regions and policy fields under scrutiny. The underlying analytical framework of our case studies is actor-centered institutionalism of Scharpf and Mayntz (Mayntz/Scharpf 1995, Scharpf 1997).
According to the framework, we focus on differences among regions and policies considering the modes of governance, which consist of different modes of interaction among the actors and the institutions enabling the interactions. Involved actors are distinguished according to whether they are state or non-state actors, and to the resources, they have at their disposal. Resources can be informational, material, institutional and idiosyncratic resources as well as technology and knowledge resources. Actor constellations represent the set of actors that are involved in policy interactions – their capabilities (translated into potential “strategies”) and the degree to which their goals are compatible or incompatible with one another. Thus, the constellation describes the level of potential conflict, which can range from pure coordination to pure conflict. Strategies can target the analysed policies (environmental, social and ethnic issues) as well as the relation between state and non-state actors in general. As mentioned above the different modes of interaction are unilateral actions, negotiated agreement and hierarchical direction.

Where existent the case studies focus on the various modes of negotiations between state and non-state actors in order to examine more in detail the way non-state actors participate in policy-making. Negotiations are for example distinguishable between spot-contracts, distributive bargaining and problem solving. Spot-contracts are a mode of negotiation, which includes immediate exchange of resources. Problem solving is a mode of negotiation, which consists of pure pooling of resources in order to solve problems jointly. Distributive bargaining instead means negotiations over the distribution of costs and benefits. Following Scharpf institutions do not have a theoretical defined fixed number of variables, which could be classified. Institutions are rather considered as being the most important factors influencing the actors, actors’ constellations and modes of interactions (Scharpf 1997).

**Overview: Analytical framework of actor-centered institutionalism**

![Diagram of the analytical framework of actor-centered institutionalism](source: Mayntz/Scharpf 1995)
3) Participation of NGOs in Regional Ethnic Policy

“Ethnic policy is a system of normative, organizational and ideological measures of a state which has the aims of solving contradictions in the ethnic sphere and taking into account, combining and realizing ethnic interests” (Tavadov 2007: 252). Ethnic policy in the Russian Federation (RF) has several specific features: first, a big quantity of ethnic groups (over 160 ethnic groups\(^6\)); second, most ethnic groups have been living here for hundreds of years. In contrast, the ethnic policy of many other countries has to deal with new immigrant ethnic groups. The main aims of ethnic policy in the RF today are to form the Russian nation, a sense of belonging and attachment to the Russian nation; to realize the cultural interests of ethnic groups; and to solve contradictions in the ethnic sphere\(^7\).

The ethnic sphere is regulated by several federal laws such as the Constitution of the RF, 1993 (according to it, the obligation to realize ethnic policy is shared between the federal and the regional levels); the federal law of the RF “The Ethnic Cultural Autonomy (ECA)\(^8\)”, 1996 (which provides the legal framework for state support to ECAs); the Concept of the State Ethnic Policy of the RF, 1996 (which reflects the aims, the principles and the mechanisms of ethnic policy in the RF) and so on. Detailed ethnic programmes are adopted on the regional level, as only on the regional level it is possible to pay attention to all ethnic features of a region, which are extremely different from region to region.

The analysis of these normative documents shows the governance structures of ethnic policy in Russia. They can be distinguished into hierarchical, which are obviously dominant, network and market governance structures. The main difference between them is how they can influence ethnic policy through their decisions directly or indirectly. Hierarchy, represented by state actors (SAs), as a mode of governance, can influence ethnic policy directly. Market, represented by non-state actors (NSAs), can affect ethnic policy indirectly through influencing the ethnic sphere. It is not still clear, whether network between SAs and NSAs in ethnic policy, as a governance structure, influences ethnic policy directly or indirectly. How significant the impact of network structures or interactions between state and non-state actors on ethnic policy is, is possible to understand through a detailed analysis of networks on the regional level.

Two Russian regions were chosen for the analysis and comparison: the Krasnodar (KR) and Stavropol regions (SR). These regions are very similar in many aspects such as

\(^{6}\) The Russian population census of 2002.

\(^{7}\) The Concept of the State Ethnic Policy of the Russian Federation, 1996.

\(^{8}\) ECA is a form of non-governmental organization along ethnic lines, which is a union of Russian citizens belonging to an ethnic minority on a corresponding territory of the Russian Federation, which freely unites for solving the questions: to preserve ethnic identity, to develop ethnic language, education, culture, to keep ethnic traditions.
• geographically, they are located in the Southern Federal District; that means that they have got similar historical, cultural, social and economic backgrounds;
• ethnically, the two regions have similar ethnic structures (the biggest ethnic group is Russians with more than 80%, the second biggest one is Armenians (5%) and the third one is Ukrainians (2%)); the whole number of ethnic groups in SR as well as in KR is approximately 120 ethnic groups\(^9\);
• demographically, the regions experienced mass migration in the 90s\(^10\), and they share similar consequences of this process today: competition in the labor market, in the property market and pressure on the social sphere, etc.;
• both areas are part of the North Caucasus (NC), a territory overloaded with ethnic conflicts.

Thus, the two regions have a multiethnic population and high potential of an ethnic conflict. The authorities of these regions are not able to solve problems in the ethnic sphere alone and they are using tools such as the interactions with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to maintain interethnic stability. Both regions have a similar regional normative base of ethnic policy, for example the main documents in both regions are the regional target programs such as “Harmonization of interethnic relationships and development of ethnic cultures” in KR (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007), “Development of interethnic and interdenominational relationships in SR 2007-2009” (2006). These documents recognize that NGOs (in particular NGOs along ethnic lines) play a very important role in the formation of interethnic tolerance, interethnic peace and underline the necessity to develop an interaction between state actors and NGOs in ethnic policy.

**Network Governance Structures in Regional Ethnic Policy**

Both regions have platforms for interactions between state (SAs) and non-state actors (NSAs) in ethnic policy, which can be called network governance structures. Interactions between SAs and NSAs in regional ethnic policy occur within advisory bodies, such as in SR: The Advisory Body for Ethnic Affairs Under the Governor, which was established in 2005; the Youth Advisory Body for Ethnic Affairs under the Committee for Interethnic and Cossack Affairs, 2007; in KR: the Advisory Body for Development of Civil Society and Human rights (the representative of more than 30 NGOs along ethnic lines is a member of this body), 2005. Interactions between SAs and NSAs occur also within the special governmental departments, which exist on the regional as well as on the local levels and which are responsible to provide interactions with

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\(^9\) The Russian population census of 2002.
\(^10\) As mentioned before, almost all migrant ethnic groups were typical for these regions for hundreds of years, but the migration changed the proportion of some ethnic groups in the ethnic structure in many areas of the regions.
NGOs along ethnic lines. They are in SR the Committee for Interethnic and Cossack Affairs, 2006 (regional level); the Department for Interethnic Relations and Interactions with NGOs, Religious and Cossack Organizations, 2005 (local level) and in KR the Department for Interactions with NGOs, Religious Organizations and Monitoring Migration Processes, 2004 (regional level), The Department for Interactions with NGOs along ethnic lines and Monitoring of Migration Situation, 2005 (local level). In my work, I am analyzing the interactions between SAs and NSAs within such network governance structures as the advisory bodies and within the work of the above mentioned special governmental bodies on the regional level.

**Formal Institutional Setting**

In both regions, the regional normative bases provide information about the legal framework of these interactions. The laws\(^\text{11}\) prescribe that a member of the interactions can be representatives of regional and local executive bodies and NGOs, specifically NGOs along ethnic lines within the frame of the work of the special governmental bodies in both regions, which are interested in questions of solving social, cultural and organizational problems of ethnic groups. In both regions, the normative bases provide the opportunities for participation of NGOs in agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy implementation. However, in SR the role of NGOs is more focused on the function of consultation that weakens the effectiveness of institutional setting. In KR NGOs became an important element of policy implementation. In both regions, actors are free to advance their interests, but decisions are made by majority vote, if a negotiated agreement is not possible. In addition, topics for meetings are put by SAs or by a particular part of the members. These network structures give hope to NSAs that their voices will be heard and opinions are taken into account, but made decisions of these interactions have only consultative status for all actors. It should be noted that in both regions there is no normative prescription of the process of acquisition into these bodies and clearing up the process of the implementation of made decisions into normative acts in which could be reflected who is responsible for what and what consequences exist for breaking laws.

\(^{11}\) The Resolution of the Governor of the SR “About the Committee for Interethnic and Cossack Affairs in the SR”, 2006.  
The Resolution of the Governor of the KR “About the Department for Interactions with NGOs, Religious Organizations and Monitoring Migration Processes”, 2004.  
The Decree of the Administration of the SR “About the Youth Advisory Body for Ethnic Affairs under the Committee for Interethnic and Cossack Affairs in the SR”, 2007.  
Actors and Actor Constellation

In both regions, there are many state and non-state actors engaged in these interactions. Most SAs are represented by regional executive bodies; NSAs are represented by non-governmental organizations along ethnic lines, such as different kinds of ethnic cultural organizations (ECOs). There are about 100 ECOs in KR and over 60 ECOs in SR. Because of transaction costs, it is not possible to involve all of them into the work of the network governance structures. Therefore, it seems to be important to analyze the opportunities for access to these structures and to mention the way, how and what kinds of NSAs are recruited into these bodies. As can be seen above there is no normative prescription about how to become a member. An analysis of the lists of members of the network governance structures in both regions shows that in KR the access to the mentioned bodies have loyal as well as opposition NGOs, in SR only loyal organizations.

SAs have to cooperate with NSAs because of their different kinds of resources. First of all knowledge resources, only an ECO has quite full information about processes in a particular ethnic group, about the reasons for them and their consequences. Based on this information an ECO has knowledge of how to satisfy the interests of an ethnic group and to solve the problems connected with an ethnic group. ECOs also have material resources: properties, financial funding from ethnic businessmen or/and native countries. There are also two other kinds of resources, which are very important here: the quantity of an ethnic group in the regional population and idiosyncratic resources, specifically, popularity and authority of the leaders of ECOs among the ethnic groups and the regional population. Usually ECOs are headed by one of the most prominent representatives of an ethnic group. The extent of political, economic, social, cultural power of ECOs depends mostly on these two factors. At the same time, ECOs need institutional and legal resources, which state actors have. Mutual interdependence brings them into interactions.

State and non-state actors interact in order to reach their own aims; their aims are transformed into their strategies within the network structures. The main aim of ECOs is to realise their cultural, social, economic and sometimes political interests in current regional policies. In KR ECOs prefer to reach their aims through formal as well as through informal contacts with state actors. Usually large ethnic groups use informal ways (ethnic deputies, lobbying), small ethnic groups, not having these tools, use formal contacts. In SR they use almost only informal ways, because, as said above, formal structures here are very weak and thus useless for achieving the aims.

There is no connection between the quantity of an ethnic group and the number of its representatives in an advisory body. Usually an ethnic group can have only one or two representatives (if it has more than one ECO) in an advisory body. Thus, in the frame of an advisory body all ethnic groups are almost equal. But they are not equal in opportunities to use informal channels. A small ethnic group cannot create a strong lobby group or push its representatives into a parliament.
The aims of SAs in SR are to provide services that must be provided according to the federal laws and to control political activity of ECOs. Two years of struggle for political power between the political elites in SR have turned ECOs into a source of people’s mobilization along ethnic lines. Therefore, today regional authorities see ECOs as institutions with political ambitions and political power, which can be used to support other political elites. Thus, the political authorities are trying to prevent such kind of ECOs from their activities. Therefore, their strategies within the network structures are to create parallel ECOs to the opposition ECOs in the same ethnic group in order to reduce the resources of the opposition ECO; to limit the access of opposition ECOs to politics through prevention of their participation in network structures and through labeling them as radical elements; and to have an access to ECO’s resources because of their significance and importance for maintaining interethnic stability. From 2005 the authorities of KR have been trying a new strategy toward ECOs namely a dialog with loyal ECOs as well as opposition ECOs to reach common aims of ethnic policy. To create in KR high-quality investment conditions, which is the aim number one today, is impossible in the conditions of high ethnic tension. The strategies of state actors in KR therefore are to get access to ECO’s resources, to recognize and/or support interest groups; to provide services that should be provided according to the demand of today's life. The authorities of KR are actively supporting the activities of ECOs by giving them free offices, rooms and financing their cultural performances.

It should be mentioned that the presence of coordination or conflict between SAs and NSAs significantly depends on the problem of the discussion. Nevertheless, based on the analysis of the interviews with the main actors of regional ethnic policy in both regions\textsuperscript{13}, the following conclusions can be made. In KR the aims of SAs as well as NSAs have the same base. Both sides are not interested in increasing of ethnic tension in the region and are ready to interact openly and interactively in order to maintain interethnic peace and, as a result, to create better conditions for economic development of the region, which are seen profitable by SAs as well as by ECOs (ethnic businessmen). We can call it coordination. In the SR NSAs are still using their ability to increase or decrease interethnic tension to get social, economic or political advantages. SAs want to maintain interethnic peace by using the resources of NSAs, but do not want to limit their power over them and to allow increase of economic and political resources of ECOs. There is no trust in relations between SAs and NSAs. It can be named conflict constellation.

\textsuperscript{13} The actors were interviewed in September-October 2008.
In both regions, interactions between SAs and NSAs are organized and governed by the state actors. Only SAs can turn a decision into a normative act. So clearly, SAs are dominant in both regions.

Modes of Interaction

There are three possible modes of interactions within these network structures. Policy outcomes can be result of unilateral action, negotiated agreement or majority vote. Every actor in the network structures has a right to act unilaterally. There is no legal obligation for SAs as well as for NSAs to follow made decisions. All decisions have consultative status for all actors. For decision-making in frame of the advisory bodies majority vote is used, in order to reduce transaction costs of negotiation due to a big number of actors, more than 30, in each case. However, the main mode of interaction in all cases is negotiated agreement. In frame of the advisory and the special governmental bodies, actors at first try to reach a negotiated agreement, if it is not possible, they use unilateral action and/or majority vote.

Negotiated agreement in SR within the advisory body can be called spot contracts. There is a topic for the discussion, but the result of the discussion is often neither how to solve the problem nor who will solve it. One reason for that is the lack of motivation of NSAs to come to a mutual conclusion, because the topics are very common and fuzzy or they became fuzzy and simply theoretical during the discussions, and they understand that SAs are not ready and in some cases do not want to take their opinions into account. For example, the meeting on the 10 of May in 2007, the topic was “The activities of Slavic ethnic organizations”. The core problems were dissatisfaction of the cultural, social needs of Slavic ethnic groups and, as a result, the increase of radical activities in their communities. During the meeting six reports were presented by scientists (4), officials (1) and leaders of ECOs (1). Most of them reflected only theoretical and historical reasons for the problems. The result of the meeting was recommendations to the executive bodies to improve cultural, social, economic conditions of a life of Slavic ethnic groups. In this case, there was clear, who would solve the problem, but the questions how and what to do exactly were not determined. In spite of the importance of this theme and an absence of the real solutions, the topic has never been discussed in the advisory body after this meeting.

Negotiated agreements within the special governmental bodies in SR have features of bargaining. SAs in advance put a problem and tête-à-tête with an ECO or several ECOs discuss the problem of distribution of costs and benefits. For instance, the organization of The Day of the

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14 The minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Body for Ethnic Affairs under the Governor, 10.05.2007.
City (or the Day of the Region), where ECOs should present their culture: dances, songs, food and so on. During the meeting actors discuss the distribution of responsibilities and costs.

In case of KR, the work of the advisory body can be characterized by problem solving. The main aim of every meeting is to find a solution for coordination problems among SAs and NSAs activities in different spheres of life including the ethnic sphere.

More detailed discussions about ethnic problems occur within the work of the special governmental body; here we can talk about positive coordination, as the development of new ways of solving problems as well as the discussion “who will do what”. Last year it was decided to use the positive experience of the mechanism of interactions between ECOs, local and regional executive bodies in Krasnodar in other areas of KR. It was decided to form the group of representatives from ECOs, local and regional authorities and to organize their trips and meetings with representatives of ECOs and local officials in different parts of the region to provide information about this mechanism. This idea of the exchange experience was developed and provided in reality. In 2008, several meetings were taken place in KR.

**Informal Institutional Setting**

In both regions, there are some significant gaps in the laws as it was mentioned above. Their consequences are the presence of informal rules, which fill these gaps. In the SR a membership in the network structures, have loyal NGOs, which are ready to play according to the rules of state actors. It does not mean the presence of a full agreement between them and, as a result, positive coordination. In contrast, to be loyal very often means the lack of opportunities to say the own opinion. Thus, officially made decisions do not fully reflect opinions and interests of loyal ECOs, and, thus, they are weak in their utility. In addition, some powerful ECOs have no access to these structures, consequently opinions and interests of their ethnic groups cannot be reflected in a decision-making process. That makes decisions less useful. The absence of the legal mechanisms of turning decision into a legal one creates an atmosphere of the lack of motivation, especially in case of difficulties to present the own opinion. In the KR we have the similar gaps in the laws, but not the same results. SAs see NSAs as a partner, they are ready to interact with loyal as well as opposition NGOs as long as they represent interests of some part of an ethnic group. NGOs can see direct results of these interactions. Their opinions are reflected in current political processes, and they have favorable conditions for the satisfaction of their cultural needs. That is why they are motivated even though there is no legal prescription of turning negotiated agreements into a law.
Conclusion
Based on the information about both regions the following assumptions can be made:

• The dominant governance structure in regional ethnic policy is hierarchy;
• There are new governance structures in ethnic policy in Russia, namely network governance structures;
• The main reason for presence of network governance structures in the ethnic sphere is, that SAs can not reach the aim of ethnic policy alone, they need resources of NGOs along ethnic lines;
• Characteristics of network governance structures depend on a state strategy towards NGOs.

Obviously, today civil society activism is changing the regional governance structures in regional ethnic policy in SR and KR and is leading to development of network governance structures. However, the level of potential influence of NGOs on policy agenda setting, policy formation and participation in policy implementation within the work of network governance structures still significantly depends on the favourable formal as well as informal conditions controlled by the governmental bodies of the regions.

4) Participation of NGOs in Regional Social Policy
The analysis of three cases (housing policy, methods of cooperation between NGOs and the state and accessibility for handicapped) in social policy in the regions Permskij Krai (Perm) and Nižegorodskaya Oblast´ (Niznij) reveals, that professionally working and experienced NGOs in the social sphere, willing to work with state institutions, and able to convince state actors of their experience and ability, are generally able to influence regional social policy. In this paper, I will describe the interactions between state and non-state actors in the case of “accessibility for handicapped” (further accessibility). Accessibility here means the guarantee for citizens with physically limited mobility\textsuperscript{15} to enter buildings of social need and public interest without barriers. Guarantee means that regulations are legally defined AND implemented. For people with limited mobility this guarantee is a basic need for being able to live independently and to participate in public life\textsuperscript{16}. As both regions analyzed here lack accessibility to all kinds of...

\textsuperscript{15} Handicapped, older citizens, pregnant women and citizens using pushchairs.

\textsuperscript{16} Concerns education, profession, working place, family, leisure and amusement e.g. culture sport events, public transport.
buildings, not to mention public transport\textsuperscript{17}, this issue is important to many NGOs, which stand up for interests of handicapped.

**Formal Institutional Setting**

Analyzing the institutional setting, at first have to be considered the special regulations concerning the issue of “accessibility” and secondly, general regulations concerning the possibilities of interactions between state and non-state actors\textsuperscript{18}. There are several federal laws, which are important in this context. The constitution of the RF from 1993\textsuperscript{19}, the federal law “About the protection of handicapped in RF” from 1995, the town planning code of the RF and other norms and regulations of building\textsuperscript{20} among others - all these regulations are set with the aim to gain more accessibility. Furthermore, there are federal laws guaranteeing freedom of expression, of interest articulation, the right of citizens to found NGOs, and many rules for NGOs, concerning the right to exist and to work. Apart from this it is generally possible for state actors to include civil society actors into the policy-making process.

In Perm there are additional regional normative acts, which concern accessibility or the interaction between state and non-state actors in general. The first bill in the RF “About the guarantee for barrier free access of handicapped and other citizens with limited mobility to buildings of informational and social importance and transport” was passed in Perm in 2004. The target programme “About rehabilitation and guarantee of vital activity of handicapped in Permskij Krai 2006-2008” followed, in which the state financed projects for handicapped, among them accessibility projects.\textsuperscript{21} Furthermore, one regional law from 2006 regulates building activity.\textsuperscript{22} The mentioned laws describe the aims and measures, which have to be taken to guarantee accessibility. According to the survey of the Perm Regional Department of the All Russian Association for Handicapped, (RAH, Perm), the governor, the regional government and the regional prosecution are responsible for the abidance of these laws. One important council, which takes actively part in the interaction between state actors and NGOs in solving the accessibility problem, is the “round table for cooperation between state actors and civil society

\textsuperscript{17} The survey of the Perm department of the Russian wide association for handicapped (further RAH, Perm) from 2007 shows that from 216 buildings of social need only, 63\% are not accessible, 27\% are partly accessible and only 10\% are accessible. In Niznij, the situation is at the most slightly better in the city centre of the capital of the region, but there are no overall and official surveys.

\textsuperscript{18} I won’t be able to mention all laws, which guarantee the possibility of interaction and communication between state and non-state actors here. I will mention only important points in the context of this case.

\textsuperscript{19} Among others the constitution guarantees all citizens the right of participation in public life, rehabilitation and health.

\textsuperscript{20} This law guarantees the accessibility to all buildings of social need.

\textsuperscript{21} Among others the RAH Perm organized information tours about modern wheelchairs. (Interview with V.I. Shishkina, autumn 2008). The target programme will be continued until 2011 (http://invak.info/content/view/7474/1/).

\textsuperscript{22} „About the regulation of town-planning activity in Permskij Krai“.
actors”, founded in 2004. Among others, there are very prominent members of the round table: the governor, the human rights representative and the deputy representative of the governors` administration. Therefore, the decisions of this institution are taken into account. The round table meets in case of necessity and with changing staff according to the problem. The regulations of access for participation (boundary rule) are not transparent, as well as the modus of suggesting a subject. The round table is organised by the department of political connection. What is additionally interesting to see in Perm is that unlike Niznij, there is no institution like the “Public Chamber”, because until now, non-state actors as well as state actors in Perm do not see the necessity to found an institution like this, on the contrary, they fear that this new institution and new regulations could complicate coordination and interaction.

Along with the federal laws, in the Niznij region there are also exiting and theoretically working normative acts and many regulations, which are partly or fully concerned with accessibility. Although the law “About accessibility for the citizens with limited mobility in Nižegorodskaya Oblast” was passed only recently in the beginning of 2009, there have been several target programmes and regulations alike to the ones described for Perm, which have been passed since 2003. As the involved actors furthermore already had more experience with the difficulties of implementing such a law than in Perm 2004, it is more precise in formulating strict responsibilities for the executive organs. However, as the law is new, it is too soon to give conclusions about its effects on the situation. So far, both regions do not really differ in their institutional setting.

However, the institutions concerned with the coordination between state actors and civil society representatives in general differ between Perm and Niznij. Unlike in Perm in Niznij a bill for the foundation of a Public Chamber was passed in 2006 and the new institution has been founded similar to the structure of the Federal Public Chamber. The Public Chamber has a static staff without high-ranking regional representatives taking part in the discussion; but the regional representatives are informed of the results later. The other organ in Niznij, concerned especially with working out and bringing in the bill in 2008, is a department within the administration of the governor; actually, a similar structure to what is the department for political connections in Perm.

Thus, there are some more councils and forums in Niznij, but this is, as can be seen in the part of informal institutions and modes of interaction, necessary, because access to state actors is more difficult in Niznij than in Perm.

23 “About the basic interaction of state actors of the Perm region with NGOs”.
24 For a detailed list see http://irex-dialog.ru/.
25 Regional law „About the Public Chamber of the Nižegorodskaya Oblast”.
26 http://www.oprf.ru/ru/about/
Summing up the institutional setting in both regions, apart from the very important fact of unclear boundary rules for non-state actors concerning councils and forums, in all these regulations, which formally guarantee accessibility, there is a lack of strong rules of who is responsible for the implementation and how the implementation is organised and controlled. Furthermore, consequences and fines in case of the breach of the laws are not clear. As well, often, existing laws in connected areas (building, finances, etc.) are not consequently adopted and interlocked with the new ones concerning accessibility. Thus, due to the given institutional setting, on the one hand, there is much space for ignoring the laws or implementing them only partly. On the other hand, the lack of regulation provides possibilities for engaged actors, state and non-state, to make accessibility come true. Both possibilities are used, as can be seen in the chapter of interaction.

**Actors and Actor constellation**

In Perm, the following state actors are involved in the issue of accessibility: the governor, the department for political connections in the administration of the governor, the regional commissioner of human rights, and the regional prosecution. Apart from this strong executive focus, the regional parliament is less concerned with the topic, as all normative acts are formally working. As non-state actors there is first RAH, Perm, which is rather independent now, but in Soviet times was a state financed association, which still has a good connection to the state actors and a strong rootage in the whole region. More in the background, there are other NGOs for handicapped and human rights groups, which, in Perm, enjoy an excellent reputation and have good, partly personal contacts with high-ranked state actors. To complete the list, there are private actors as the airport administration, which have been confronted by NGOs and the prosecution with violations concerning accessibility in their buildings.

State actors in Perm posses, above all, material and institutional resources. Apart from this, knowledge resources and technical predominance in most cases make them dominant players in the network.

The key resources of the named non-state actors are information as well as knowledge resources, and, as members of some councils and forums, they have certain institutional resources. Especially some of the human rights activists have idiosyncratic resources and, as RAH, Perm has its own companies, material resources to act independently, are available too.

The actors in Niznij are quite similar to Perm except the existence of the Public Chamber and the lack of human rights activists in Niznij. Instead, in Niznij there is another strong NGO for

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27 They have their own companies, which finance the associations’ staff and projects.
invalids. Among the state actors are the governor, the vice governor and its department, responsible for the interaction with civil society actors, the prosecution and the regional board of the tax authorities. Among the non-state actors are, cinemas, banks, RAH, Niznij and the organisation for invalids Invatur, a small, young, NGO, which is more demanding but less rooted in the region than RAH, Niznij. The Public Chamber is something in between state and non-state actor. This formally non-state, but in reality state controlled institution\textsuperscript{28}, has been an important forum in 2008 for discussing accessibility. As in Perm, the focus of the coordination is between executive state actors and NGOs for invalids and, although RAH, Niznij and Invatur have been member of the working group, which worked out the law in 2008 (see interaction), the focus of interaction is on the work with the administration of the governor, who introduced the bill. The resources are distributed in Niznij a little bit more towards the state actors, which can be shown by three aspects. RAH, Niznij is headed by a former staff member of the social ministry and member of the town parliament of Niznij Novgorod, who has many personal contacts and good relationship to all kinds of state actors. As well, the regional director of tax authorities influences the improvement of accessibility very much and a third aspect is the fact, that the governor is personally supporting the issue of integration of invalids into society in general and accessibility in particular. Nevertheless, Invatur as non-state actor has quite successfully won national and international grants for accessibility projects and is therefore acting independently and with much pressure, so information and to a certain extend material resources make the non-state actors strong too, but not as strong as in Perm.

Summing up, it can be concluded, that in both regions all relevant actors would be better off in their striving for accessibility, if they united their resources.

Unlike other cases, e.g. human rights, there is no conflict between state and non-state actors concerning the necessity of accessibility for invalids. Strategies between willing state actors and non-state actors are therefore based on pure coordination concerning accessibility. However, the fact that the general attitude towards civil society actors and their participation differ in both regions, makes the actor constellation a little bit more complicated. Perm is more open to interaction with NGOs, more oriented on maintaining common goals through sharing resources and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{29} That gives in Perm space for open interaction between state and non-state actors, without tactical games. Niznij on the other hand, is a region, where the attitude towards

\textsuperscript{28} State control is due to the modus of nomination: Only on third of the members are chosen by the civil society, the rest is chosen by state actors. This modus gives reason to see the Public Chamber very loyal to the state.

\textsuperscript{29} For example, deputies of the regional parliament acknowledged officially that NGOs are important actors in the field of guaranteeing accessibility and should be included into the coordination and concentration of material and human resources for this aim.
civil society participation is predominated by strictly controlled interaction\textsuperscript{30}. Thus, there are conflicting strategies in Niznij concerning civil society in general and interaction for improving accessibility in particular. That makes the work for critical NGOs in the area of accessibility difficult, if not impossible, and for loyal NGOs much easier.

However, the core conflict, which concerns both regions, and seriously hinders improvements, lies within the state actors, some of which have different priorities and therefore do not engage fully for accessibility, but merely try to calm down the NGOs a little by offering partly implementation of negotiated agreements.

**Modes of Interaction**

To describe exemplarily what is going on within the described institutional setting and the given actors, their strategies and resources I will describe, what has been developed concerning accessibility in 2008 in both regions.

As in Perm the normative basis exists, the aim in 2008 was to improve the implementation of all valid normative acts: Above all the RAH, Perm has been trying to use existing regulations and institutions to improve the situation of handicapped. By several actions and projects, they succeeded to bring the issue of accessibility on the agenda again. Since 2008, for the first time they have worked together with prosecution, have made surveys by using their human resources and their technical and knowledge resources. This gives them more arguments and the possibility to enhance pressure. After having the issue on the agenda, RAH Perm used the existing institution of the “Round table” to present the results of the survey and work out recommendations together with high-ranking state actors. As there is no regulation of how to call a round table, this has been organized in informal way. As a result, the “Round table” formulated recommendations for realising the accessibility faster. The core demand of these recommendations concerned the activation of regional and local executive organs, as well as the activation of local organizations of handicapped, the former to realize existing normative acts, the latter to strengthen the pressure on state actors by public control of buildings.\textsuperscript{31} These recommendations conceive the essence of what has been described as the deficit of the institutional setting. As the current improvements show, RAH, Perm had success. The airport will be accessible as well as some policlinics and public buildings. However, it is too soon to say, if this kind of negotiated agreement is another attempt to calm the situation instead of solving the problem or the beginning of a substantial improvement.

\textsuperscript{30} Whereas loyal NGOs are supported financially and invited to participate in working groups, opposition groups like human rights groups are systematically repressed, partly with illegal measures.

\textsuperscript{31} Minutes of the Round table meeting.
In Niznij, thanks to the personal engagement and initiative within the institutional setting, which is too weak to enforce accessibility right away, there has been a substantial step forward concerning the integration of some handicapped into the labour market and concerning accessibility to all regional tax offices. Network governance, problem oriented work and the abdication on pure economic thinking as well as personal contacts brought about a project of the regional board of the tax offices to establish working places for handicapped and accessibility to these buildings. Strong, loyal and decisive partner in this project is the RAH, Niznij, further partners are universities and other education institutions. All this took place within the active and personal support of the governor, what explains that necessary financial resources have been provided. It is, however, questionable, if this tempo of improvement will be continued as this project could also serve the strategy of calming down critical voices in civil society instead of transferring the project to other state institutions in future projects.

The second big project in Niznij in 2008 has been the law of “accessibility for the citizens with limited mobility in Nizhgorodskaya oblast’”. In the development of the law, many different state and non-state actors took part. Invatur and RAH, Niznij have been members of the working group for this law within the administration of the governor. The Public Chamber contributed with recommendations and informal negotiations with deputies and members of the executive organs. Invatur, with its stronger oppositional character, supported the working process with independent controls of buildings and informed the prosecution about violated laws; as well, Invatur organized an informal round table together with state actors to inform them about the current legal situation. Moreover, finally yet importantly, the regional parliament passed the bill. Therefore, in this case, there is a clear negotiated agreement in the mode of problem solving. It is questionable, if some executive state actors, who have not been actively involved until now, will be willing and able to implement this law. This needs still more negotiated agreements, especially among executive state actors.

**Informal Institutional Setting**

Based on this analysis, we can see that there is interaction within the described institutional setting among the named actors, but the interaction goes further, because the institutional setting is not tight enough and informal interaction is needed to gain results. So, there are informal channels to support the institutions, to enhance the efficiency of its functions and, where no regulations exist, only informal channels are used, which is much easier for NGOs in Perm than in Niznij, where the chance to interact informally with state actors is reserved exclusively for loyal actors.
Conclusion

Despite the success to be involved into policymaking, NGOs did only achieve the mentioned regulations until now, but did not achieve substantial improvements concerning accessibility. So, crucial for the improvement seems to be not only participation and influence of NGOs in working out regulations, but also enhancement of power to monitor the implementation of regulations, because obviously the state actors, who bargained, are not able to transport the decisions to the single civil servants, who should act according to the regulations. So, what is needed are more tight formal institutional settings in both regions with more concrete rules, within which single state actors are responsible for the implementation. Otherwise, they have to bear the consequences. Within this more tight institutional setting, NGOs should take more seriously the role of monitoring the implementation and not fear to institute legal proceedings to support the rule of existing law in the regions, even if they risk conflicts with state actors and therefore their good personal relationship.

5) Participation of NGOs in Regional Environmental Policy

The case studies in the field of environmental policy show that in both regions several independent and powerful ecological NGOs (EcoNGOs) exist and that state actors voluntarily negotiate in networks with EcoNGOs, even with opposition minded EcoNGOs, in order to mobilize resources for problem solving. Moreover, state actors have to engage in negotiations within compulsory joint decision systems, which are prescribed by law, in order to bargain mutually acceptable compromises and, thus, internalize negative externalities of their actions. These cases also show, however, that state actors try to circumvent mandatory negotiations within joint decision systems and react unilaterally or they try to change the formally mandatory negotiations into informal hierarchical direction.

Actors

There is a wide range of actors involved in regional environmental policy. Main actors are the Federal Ministry of Nature Resources and Environmental protection and its regional controlling agencies, business, EcoNGOs and trade unions. For these cases it is, however, sufficient to focus mainly on the interactions between the regional administration, business and EcoNGOs. There are many EcoNGOs registered in both regions. However, only a few EcoNGOs, six in Krasnodar and two in Irkutsk region are active in the cases under scrutiny. The EcoNGOs support sustainable development, which aims to find a balance between economical and ecological needs
so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but in the indefinite future. The major EcoNGOs in both regions have profound knowledge of environmental law. They know how to use the institutional instruments at their disposal in order to show their dissent, e.g. writing petitions to influential politicians and international organizations, collecting signatures, organizing various forms of demonstrations, taking part in environmental impact assessments and public hearings and filing suits against violations of environmental laws. Moreover, many EcoNGOs have an additional focus on a specific field of ecological activism. The most influential EcoNGO in Irkutsk, for example, has broad expertise in establishing and consulting EcoTourism. A second group of actors are companies. Though there are a few examples of social and ecological responsible business actors, most companies do not adhere to corporate social responsibility and try to circumvent environmental laws and regulations, when it is economical beneficial.

The third major actors are the regional administrations. The head of the regional administration (governor) is proposed and dismissed by the president of the Russian Federation. Thus, he is forced to implement in an effective and efficient manner the policies, which are formulated at the federal level. The position of the Kremlin in environmental policy is that state actors have to provide for ecological security during the fast development of the national economy. This means, that environmental policy should not impede economic development, but should only prevent ecological disasters and incidents. Secondly, the regional administrations have to secure peoples support for the Kremlins party. Therefore, the regional administration has to balance various regional interests.

Interactions and Institutions: Problem Solving in Networks

How do state and non-state actors interact? In 2008 both regions faced major ecological problems, which the state was not in grade to solve alone. In Baikalsk, Irkutsk region, a town building pulp and paper mill, which directly employed about one fourth of the cities population and provided about 95% of the municipal budget, declared bankruptcy. The bankruptcy was caused by the decision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection towards the pulp and paper mill to enhance the factories compliance to environmental law, which impeded the factory to produce its most profitable product.

When the pulp and paper mill declared its bankruptcy, the Irkutsk regional administration was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. The factory announced that the only way to rescue the company would be lowering the environmental standards in favour of the factory. The

32 Instruction by G.B. Pulikovsky, former head of Rostekhndazor, controlling agency of the Ministry of Natural Ressources and Environmental Protection.
Irkutsk trade union picketed with more than 2000 people in the aftermath of President Medvedev’s visit to Irkutsk in order to force the regional administration to avoid mass employment. The EcoNGOs announced their strict opposition to any softening of ecological standards towards the pulp and paper mill, because the factory was regarded to be the biggest single polluter of Lake Baikal and a serious threat to the ecological stability of the lake. They threatened, that in case the factory is allowed to restart production they will repeat the mass demonstrations with more than 3000 people, which they succeeded to organize two years ago. Caught in the trap the regional administration developed in co-operation with the Russian Academy of Sciences three scenarios for dealing with this issue: first, softening environmental standards and rescuing the factory, second, entirely restructuring the factory to ecological clean production or creating alternative business in Baikalsk or, third, not doing anything.

Under pressure from both the labour union and EcoNGOs the regional administration opted for the most expensive solution and decided not to lower environmental standards, but to restructure the economy of the city by creating a tourist zone in Baikalsk. The regional administration however did not have all the needed resources to handle this job by hierarchical direction. It lacked sufficient knowledge about the financial situation of the factory, access to the workers of the factory, expertise and contacts in ecologically suitable tourism as well as sufficient manpower and financial resources to solve the problem by hierarchical direction.

Thus, the regional administration started daily negotiations with all stakeholders in the framework of commissions, conferences, workshops and meetings in order to find solutions for providing outstanding salaries to the workers of the factory as prescribed by the labour law and restructuring the entire economy of Baikalsk. For example upon request from EcoNGOs the regional administration created a regional negotiation platform which formally included scientists, EcoNGOs, business and state actors in order to pool resources to design feasible projects for restructuring the economy of Baikalsk. This negotiation platform was established as an award for business projects contributing to sustainable development in Baikalsk. The award is meant to select the best projects and provide the winners with business consulting as well as financial and administrative support. The joint jury of this award consists of

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representatives from all stakeholders, including state actors and EcoNGOs. Thus, in order to solve the huge ecological and social problems the regional administration started to negotiate voluntarily with various civil society representatives, which could significantly contribute to problem solving. The network, which evolved was formally open to everyone. Informally it included, however, only those who could offer those resources, which the regional administration needed.

Krasnodar faced an equally massive problem. In late 2007 an oil tanker sank in the Kerch strait, which caused major oil pollution at the coast of the Taman Peninsula. This disaster did not cause only ecological problems, but also social problems, because the oil pollution harmed fishing and tourism, the main source of income of the local population. All regional EcoNGOs jointly offered to co-operate with state actors and pool resources in order to deal with the oil catastrophe. They offered expertise in liquidating oil pollution, volunteers for cleaning beaches and monitoring of the polluted sites.

In this case the regional administration, however, refused to cooperate and declared that they were better able to liquidate the pollution alone. This declaration did not match reality, because the regional administration lacked sufficient financial resources and information to clean the coast properly from oil pollution. When state actors declared that the oil pollution has been liquidated, they had not cleaned at all those areas, which were not accessible to the public. Thus, instead of co-operating with EcoNGOs in order to enhance their problem solving capability, they preferred to pretend an effective solution of the problem and excluded EcoNGOs from the liquidation work.

EcoNGOs, monitoring the cleaning, discovered the disinformation of the regional administration and wrote petitions to influential politicians, applied to the regional controlling agencies of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. In consequence, they forced the regional administration to take up again and intensify cleaning. This case demonstrates that state actors are not always ready for negotiations with EcoNGOs in order to pool resources for problem solving. Here the regional administration excluded the EcoNGOs from problem solving, because they were obviously not interested in fast liquidation of the pollution. The EcoNGOs, however, turned out to be powerful enough to achieve their interests by unilateral action.

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36 “ЭКОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ВАХТА ПО СЕВЕРНОМУ КАВКАЗУ”. информационная рассылка. 18.06.2008.
ЮЖНАЯ ОКОНЕЧНОСТЬ КОСЫ ЧУШКА ПО-ПРЕЖНЕМУ В МАЗУТЕ. http://ewnc.org/?q=node/629
37 ibid.
Interactions and Institutions: Distributive Bargaining in Joint Decision Systems

In recent time, there were also major investment projects in both regions: the construction of an oil exploitation platform in the Azov Sea, Krasnodar Region, and of an oil pipeline close to the coast of Lake Baikal, Irkutsk region. These investment projects allow analysing distributive bargaining in joint decision systems. According to the environmental law, companies are subjected to mandatory negotiations with state actors and civil society representatives while designing large-scale investment projects. The companies are obliged to prepare the investment project in cooperation with regional authorities in order to verify compliance with environmental laws. Moreover, they have to conduct an environmental impact assessment, which includes public hearings in order to internalize negative externalities of the investment project by studying potential negative impacts and concerns of the public and by developing measures to prevent and reduce adverse project impacts.

However, in both cases, the company and the regional administration tried to circumvent these mandatory negotiations. For example, they did not announce the public hearing right in time, held the public hearings in localities, which were not directly affected by the investment projects or, which were difficult to reach and they did not provide to the affected public the needed documentation about the project details. Moreover, the regional administrations tried to deprive the public hearing of its function of a public negotiation platform. They announced that the decisions to construct the oil platform and the pipeline have already been taken and that the public hearing have to be understood just as an event to present the project to the public. At the end of the public hearings both companies presented the minutes of the event, which were written in advance and called on to the attendees to sign. They, thus, tried to change the mode of negotiation into hierarchical direction. The EcoNGOs in both regions, however, declared that the procedure of public hearings as well as the project itself did not comply with environmental law and the law about the environmental impact assessment and published the violations in regional and national media.

In result, in Krasnodar region the oil company and the regional administration repeated the public hearing, this time fulfilling all formal requirements, and negotiated with EcoNGOs and local deputies in order to find a mutually acceptable solution. The company agreed to remove the oil platform to another place, to conduct several corporate social responsibility measures and to implement tight ecological security measures. In Irkutsk, however, the company and the state actor, which organized the environmental impact assessment, did not negotiate with EcoNGOs in order to find a mutually acceptable solution of the problem. In order to get the permission to build the pipeline they preferred to play with the rules of the expertise instead of playing
according to the rules. In result mass protests, mobilized by EcoNGOs caused the intervention of the president, who changed by hierarchical direction the investment project in order to reflect the interests of EcoNGOs and scientists.

These cases show another feature of interactions between state, business and non-state actors. State and business actors try to circumvent joint decision systems with EcoNGOs or to change the formal mandatory negotiations into informal hierarchical direction. EcoNGOs are not always powerful enough to force state and business actors to play according to the rule, starting negotiations and, thus, internalizing negative externalities.

The analysis of these four cases certainly does not allow drawing conclusions about the general situation of civil society representatives and the mode of interaction between them and state actors neither in Russia nor in the regions and even less in other policy fields. The four cases, however, are not outliers and show some features of civil society activism, which are widespread in environmental policy. First of all, there is a high grade of “legal nihilism”. This term is used in Russia for the widespread disrespect to the law. State actors do not always implement laws and regulations and sometimes close their eyes in front of violations.

In spite of problems with rule of law in Russia, there is a vivid third sector in environmental policy. EcoNGOs have powerful resources in order to influence policy. They write petitions to influential politicians and international organisations, mobilize protest and use the formal institutions at their disposal to lobby their interests in court. Thus, state actors have to bargain with EcoNGOs over the distribution of costs and benefits in order to find a mutually acceptable compromise and, thereby, internalise the negative externalities of their actions. Moreover, state actors have to draw on the resources of EcoNGOs, if they want to overcome the information and motivation problems inherent in hierarchical direction and provide goods and services in an efficient and effective manner.

6) Conclusion

The scope of this paper was to analyse with the help of case studies the way state and non-state actors interact in Russia in formulating and implementing policy. Using the concept of governance and the actor centered institutionalism as analytical framework, we distinguished as modes of steering and coordination between state and non-state actors unilateral action in minimal institutions, negotiations in networks and hierarchical direction in organizations. Our
cases were drawn from three policies, ethnic, social and environmental policy, and five regions, Krasnodar, Stavropol, Nizhny Novgorod, Perm and Irkutsk region.
The case studies demonstrated that active NGOs do not only exist, but that state actors engage in negotiations with them, because they lack sufficient resources to solve problems by hierarchical direction and they, thus, need the support of NGOs. Apart from this, state actors are also forced to negotiate with NGOs in order to find compromises about the distribution of costs and benefits of state actions, because NGOs are nowadays powerful enough to pose serious obstacles to state actors. Negotiations usually occur within networks, understood here as semi-permanent relationships between state and non-state actors for resource exchange. However, the access to these networks is not formally fixed. This gives state actors the possibility to involve only loyal NGOs into decision making and thus, to simulate broad inclusion of civil society representatives. Finally yet importantly, it became obvious that laws and regulations are not always implemented due to vague formulations or intentional noncompliance.
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