© Laboratorium: Russian Review of Social Research. 2022. 14(2):102–119
DOI: 10.25285/2078-1938-2022-14-2-102-119

DOMESTIC NGOS RESISTING GLOBAL NEOLIBERALISM: THE IMPACT OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN SOCIETIES OF THE DISABLED, THE DEAF, AND THE BLIND ON RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY

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The reported study was funded by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (project No. 19-311-90026).

This essay analyses the impact of Russian domestic actors (specifically, traditionalist NGOs) on the government's adoption and regulation of international norms and practices regarding disability. The Russian state supports traditionalist NGOs established in Soviet times—such as the All-Russian Societies of the Disabled, the Blind, and the Deaf—rather than promoting the growth of an independent third sector based on grassroots welfare-oriented initiatives. To defend their interests and secure resources, the All-Russian Societies actively participate in the development of disability policy in Russia and advocate for adoption of practices based on international norms on disability. The essay raises the question of how traditionalist NGOs, exemplified by the All-Russian Societies, position themselves regarding the government's adoption of international norms and practices on disability and how they generally react to the state's regulation of disability. To answer this question, four phases of interactions between traditionalist NGOs and the Russian government were identified on the basis of the activities of the All-Russian societies in the field of disability regulation. The essay draws on content analysis of Russian legislative acts on social protections for people with disabilities; documents, websites, and social media of the All-Russian Societies and mass media sources from 1995 until 2021; and 13 semistructured interviews of All-Russian Societies' representatives and experts on the Russian third sector.

Keywords: Russia; Welfare; NGOs; Social Protection; Disability

Analyzing the relationship between the state and civil society organizations in different contexts has long been of interest to researchers around the world, and there is a growing body of scholarship devoted to such interactions in post-Soviet countries where, in most cases, political regimes cannot be classified as democratic. It is often assumed that authoritarian regimes impact the work of nongovernmental or-

ganizations (NGOs), reshaping their activities, strategies, and approaches and even determining their survival. However, this is not always the case, and reverse tendencies can also be observed (*2020 Report on the State of Civil Society* 2021:12).

This essay focuses on interactions between state actors and domestic disability NGOs in the context of contemporary Russian authoritarian corporatism. Existing studies assume that the political economy of corporatism benefits privileged interest groups that participate in the preparation, formulation, and implementation of particular policies (Lembruch 1984; Williamson 1985; Snyder and Ting 2008; Klingelhöfer 2019; Manjhi and Mehra 2019). Recent studies of the Russian third sector reveal the existence of such interest groups and point to the problem of inequality in allocation of state resources (Cook and Vinogradova 2006; Cox 2014; Tarasenko 2015). The government gives priority to those civil society organizations that work closely with state authorities for welfare provision to socially vulnerable groups—such organizations are endowed with the status of socially oriented NGOs. In 2010, for example, socially oriented NGOs became eligible to implement governmental strategies regarding the provision of welfare services to the youth, people with disabilities, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness (Bogdanova, Cook, and Kulmala 2018). However, Russian NGOs are not a unified group. Exploring the Russian third sector, researchers reveal the existence of puppet organizations: NGOs that were created by state efforts (Cook and Vinogradova 2006) and which are traditionalist and have extensive organizational structure and paid staff (Mercer 2002). I define these organizations as traditionalist because Russian third sector experts perceive them as Soviet-born anachronisms due to their differences vis-à-vis international NGOs such as the Disabled People's International or Rehabilitation International that were also established long time ago but have adapted their strategies and practices of protection of the welfare of people with disabilities to modern realities. These puppet organizations date back to Soviet times, but some of them currently rely on Western funding (Jakobson and Sanovich 2010). On the other hand, there are also grassroots organizations (Crotty, Hall, and Ljubownikow 2014) that are not affiliated with the state and that are advocating for human rights, protecting the environment, and fighting corruption. Such NGOs often experience problems with accessing state funding, encounter censorship, and even face banishment from the political field (*2019 Report on the State of Civil Society* 2020:107).

The inequality of the NGO field with regard to working conditions and economic benefits is visible in the interactions between the state authorities and three traditionalist civil society organizations: the All-Russian Societies of the Disabled, the Blind, and the Deaf [Vserossiiskie obshchestvennye organizatsii invalidov, slepykh, glukhikh] (henceforth, All-Russian Societies). The All-Russian Societies of the Blind and the Deaf were founded in the 1920s, and the All-Russian Society of the Disabled was created in the 1980s on the initiative and with significant support of the Soviet government. The All-Russian Societies position themselves in opposition to globalization and neoliberal trends, for example the economic and social standards promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Sharafutdinova and Dawisha 2017; Pleines 2021). Another reason for defining the All-Russian Societies

as traditionalist is that these organizations resist competitive principles in social policy and practice. They oppose the views on (self-)responsibility of vulnerable individuals and related civil society organizations that have been popularized by various international actors and are shared by many in the Russian government, in contrast to the previously dominant paradigm of state responsibility toward such individuals and their organized representatives. This generates normative clashes between these organizations and state actors, who adhere to neoliberal principles. The All-Russian Societies remain committed to state-led paternalistic support, which negatively impacts the Russian third sector by making it more unstable, vulnerable, and internally divided (Skokova, Pape, and Krasnopolskaya 2018; Fröhlich and Skokova 2020). Such NGOs often position themselves as brokers or mediators of state policy, seeking public goods and offering electoral support (Kulmala and Tarasenko 2016), or initiators of a certain course of reforms (Bindman, Kulmala, and Bogdanova 2019).

The total membership of the All-Russian Societies amounts to about 1.7 million people, the majority of whom—1.3 million—belong to the All-Russian Society of the Disabled (in total, 11.6 million of Russians were classified by the Russian state as people with disabilities in 2021[1]). These organizations have chapters across all Russian regions. Their leaders communicate with Russian officials at the level of prime minister and heads of federal ministries, and their regional representatives have an open channel for communication with regional administrations and political elites. The All-Russian Societies speak with one voice regarding common problems and challenges in disability policy and practice. However, their activities and sources of finance differ.

The interactions between Russian state authorities and the All-Russian Societies have so far received only limited scholarly attention. Gennady Smirnov (2013) analyzed the societies' participation in the development of targeted projects and in implementation of regional and federal programs of social protection and support that took into account interests of people with disabilities. This study showed that in the 2000s the organizations involved their members and employees in monitoring the implementation of state programs, while positioning themselves as an indispensable partner of government agencies, even fulfilling some of their functions. Furthermore, the state-NGO relations between 2000 and 2021 have not been studied in the context of international disability policy. Therefore, in this essay I pose an important question of how traditionalist Russian NGOs, namely the All-Russian Societies of the Disabled, the Blind, and the Deaf, position themselves regarding the government's

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[1] All-Russian Society of Blind, press release, December 2018, https://www.vos.org.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=2.

Website of the All-Russian Society of Deaf, "About," accessed December 9, 2021, https://voginfo.ru/about/.

Report of the Executive Board of the All-Russian Society of the Disabled, November 2, 2021, https://www.voi.ru/o_nas/otchety.

Rosstat, "Total number of people with disabilities by disability group. Situation of persons with disabilities," accessed December 9, 2021, https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/13964.

adoption of international norms and practices on disability and how they generally react to the state's regulation of disability.

The essay relies on content analysis of Russian legislative acts concerning social protection, annual reports of the All-Russian Societies, their websites and social media, mass media sources from 1995 until 2021, and 13 semistructured interviews with All-Russian Societies' employees and experts on the Russian third sector.

THE SOVIET ORIGINS OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN SOCIETIES

The history of the three All-Russian Societies is deeply rooted in the Soviet past. As mentioned earlier, the All-Russian Societies of the Deaf and the Blind were established in the postrevolutionary years of the Soviet era, when they started operations in Moscow and Leningrad. Despite the fact that the All-Russian Society of Disabled People was officially launched in 1988, the organization was the successor of the All-Russian Production and Consumer Association of Disabled People (PCADP) at the People's Commissariat (Ministry) for Social Welfare of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), founded in 1921. The Soviet government's priorities of that time concerned providing employment for people with disabilities by developing a network of enterprises (artels and workshops) in all industries under the ownership and management of the All-Russian Societies, as well as the construction of separate kindergartens, sanatoria, schools, places of residence, and sports facilities specifically for this population group. According to historical accounts on the organizations' websites, in the time of the New Economic Policy (1921–1924) all organizational issues were resolved democratically, and only members with a disability had the right to make decisions regarding the management of the organizations' activities and governance of the enterprises they collectively owned. The PCADP was directly supervised by the Ministry for Social Welfare of the RSFSR and, therefore, had a higher status compared to the All-Russian Societies of the Blind and the Deaf, which were under the aegis of the government of the RSFSR. However, in 1956 the Soviet government adopted a decree subordinating All-Russian Societies' enterprises directly to respective ministries, and in 1960 the PCADP's artels were completely liquidated. This resulted in growing unemployment of people with disabilities and deterioration of the physical and mental condition of many people who previously benefitted from the employment at these enterprises. In contrast to the PCADP, the enterprises owned by the Society of the Blind and the Deaf not only survived but also increased their production capacity. An important role was played by a growing regional network of educational and production enterprises, where blind and deaf people underwent vocational training for further employment in the All-Russian Societies' enterprises, which provided means for their subsistence and also brought huge profit to these organizations.

Under pressure from citizens with disabilities, in 1987 the RSFSR Council of Ministers decided to create the All-Russian Society of Disabled People. On February 2, 1988, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued

a resolution "On the Establishment of the All-Russian Voluntary Society of Disabled People in the RSFSR." The new organization copied the charter and the organizational structure (with the primacy of the central apparatus over regional departments and with elections of the central apparatus and regional chairs) from the All-Russian Societies of the Blind and the Deaf. By 1992, after the Soviet Union's collapse, chapters of the All-Russian Societies were established almost in all of the country's 89 regions.[2] By its tenth anniversary in 1998, the organization had become a powerful structure with several branches, 2.5 million members, and 25,000 local organizations. It owned about 2,000 enterprises employing 23,000 people with disabilities.[3] Nowadays the organization represents the interests of people with different kinds of disabilities and promises active protection of their rights and interests.

Below I describe the four phases of interactions between traditionalist NGOs and the Russian government that I identified analyzing the activities of the All-Russian Societies in the field of disability regulation.

1991–2000: FORMULATION OF POSITIONS AND INTERESTS

After Russia's independence, the All-Russian Societies attempted to maintain the same position and state guarantees that had been established in Soviet legislation before 1991. In the context of a volatile economic situation, impoverishment, and social instability, the All-Russian Societies experienced an urgent need for state help. Thus in 1992 they pushed for the development and adoption of policies regarding people with disabilities by research institutes, which was reflected in the presidential decree No. 802 issued that year. Then they promoted a law regarding provision of care service for people with disabilities; it was passed after the State Duma twice overrode the presidential veto by the then president Boris Yeltsin. As a result, Federal Law No. 181 "On Social Protection of People with Disabilities in the Russian Federation" was adopted on November 24, 1995, and consolidated the main mechanisms of social protection for people with disabilities in Russia.[4]

This document was innovative as it contained provisions related to social integration of people with disabilities. It envisaged setting a quota for all organizations in hiring people with disabilities, creating opportunities for people with disabilities in different industries, establishing the inadmissibility of employment contract terms that violate the rights of people with disabilities, as well as providing housing, assistance with child-rearing, and inclusion in the general education system. However, the dire economic situation in the 1990s hindered the implementation of the

[2] Lev Indolev, "Kratkaia istoriia dvizheniia invalidov v Rossii (1921–2000)," ROOI Perspektiva, March 23, 2015, https://perspektiva-inva.ru/hist-soc-mov/2275-vw-2275.

[3] See Istoriia sozdaniia VOI, chast' 4, VKontakte page of the All-Russian Society of the Disabled, April 21, 2021, https://vk.com/wall-145721895_8582.

[4] Istoriia sozdaniia VOI, chast' 4, VKontakte page of the All-Russian Society of the Disabled, April 21, 2021, https://vk.com/wall-145721895_8582.

All-Russian Societies' ideas, and subsequent amendments of the law excluded some provisions that the societies actively worked on—for example, the establishment of categories for identifying different disabilities developed by the All-Russian Societies, pension increases, and provision of transportation for people with disabilities. Thus, despite serious efforts to develop new legislation, in times of economic and social uncertainty the All-Russian Societies faced difficulties with the delivery of the benefits promised by the state.

Existing research reveals the general compliance of Russian social support programs for people with disabilities with international standards of the 1975 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Oleg Smolin (2012) argues that some norms included in the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities were partly addressed in legislative acts adopted already in the late Soviet period.

An important aspect that demonstrates the position of the All-Russian Societies on disability policy concerns their advocacy for employment of people with disabilities. The organizations implemented the principle of inclusion into the labor market by employing citizens with disabilities in the societies' own economic enterprises, thereby generating income for the All-Russian Societies. This practice largely conformed to the 1975 UN declaration and seemed to be an adaptation of international practices of active inclusion of people with disabilities through employment at the local level. However, when the Soviet Union dissolved, many commercial enterprises faced significant economic problems and eventually collapsed. Thanks to the unified efforts of the All-Russian Societies, Federal Law No. 181 consolidated the right of people with disabilities to be integrated into the labor market and reiterated the need for employers' commitment to employ people with disabilities. This was the beginning of deployment of targeted policies for persons with disabilities. The law no longer envisioned a guarantee of universal social support, as was the case of legislation from the early 1990s, but the All-Russian Societies attempted to gradually change legislation in accordance with their needs and the state's response to international norms regarding persons with disabilities.

In the 1990s international actors did not participate in shaping of post-Soviet disability policy in Russia. In that period, due to their prominent position during the Soviet period and presence in nearly all of Russia's regions, the All-Russian Societies acted as top experts on disability policy.

The organizations also actively promoted their interests through participation in the development of the Federal Program "Social Support for People with Disabilities 1995–2000." The program foresaw a coordination of work and scientific supervision of social support for people with disabilities by expert communities, ministries, and the All-Russian Societies. While the program was devised by state agencies, the authorities took into consideration the experience and interests of the All-Russian Societies. When this program was being developed, the All-Russian Societies participated in expert assessment of disability problems and the development of an information-analytical system for counting persons with disabilities, established instructions for medical and social rehabilitation, helped with the development of

prosthetics services and construction of prosthetics. Additionally, through the duration of the program, in cooperation with the state the All-Russian Societies facilitated employment of people with disabilities. While there are no available statistics for Russia as a whole, in the Chelyabinsk region the share of people with disabilities employed in accordance with the state requirements for hiring people with disabilities increased from 20.8 percent in 1997 to 61 percent in 2000; these percentages are compiled based on job applications of 4,689 people with disabilities to the state employment service (Bochko 2001).

Such activities to reduce unemployment among people with disabilities were an attempt to compensate for the weakening position of the All-Russian Societies due to the economic crisis in the 1990s and, in particular, because of the reduction of state support for these organizations after the Soviet Union collapsed. As mentioned above, international actors were not involved in the development of disability policy in Russia at that time. While the first international organizations advocating for social integration of persons with disabilities appeared in Russia in 1992, they were not in a position to influence the country's policies in this field since the Russian government relied on the established relations with the All-Russian Societies and their infrastructure. Thus, the first phase of interactions between the All-Russian Societies and the Russian state was characterized by hard work of these societies to include new (and save previous, Soviet-era) guarantees in Russia's disability policy. There were no normative or interest-based conflicts at that first stage, as the All-Russian Societies contributed to amendments regarding provision of benefits for people with disabilities, but they themselves were not responsible for the implementation of these laws.

The analysis of the legislation adopted between 1995 and 2000 reveals that the All-Russian Societies provided expert support for the development of nationwide frameworks for social protection of people with disabilities in accordance with the expertise and mandate of each organization. At the same time, the state did not provide an opportunity for the All-Russian Societies to design and implement legislative initiatives directly. They were, however, able to provide their expertise on the federal level as well as to participate partially in implementation of the federal laws.

2000–2010: NORMATIVE AND RESOURCE-RELATED CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE ALL-RUSSIAN SOCIETIES AND STATE AUTHORITIES

The second phase is related to the second governmental program "Social Support for People with Disabilities 2000–2005," which set the main goals to ensure social integration of people with disabilities, outlined tasks oriented to providing state agencies with better medical and social expertise on disability, as well as to developing facilities and enterprises in the rehabilitation industry.

This program anticipated establishment of the criteria for identification of disability, development of new technologies and rehabilitation equipment, methodological studies about creation of accessible environment, preparation of education-

al literature, creation of a national register of persons with disabilities, and involvement of the wider population in cultural and educational events on disability issues. All these activities were shaped by the All-Russian Societies: these organizations participated in the formulation and adaptation of best international practices, as well as the implementation of the state program, in accordance with their interests. The organizations managed to influence the state's decision to reorganize the system of rehabilitation institutions for people with disabilities, for example by renovating (at state's expense) the sanatoriums for persons with disabilities that belonged to the All-Russian Societies. Within the program's framework, some market mechanisms were introduced into the activities of rehabilitation institutions, including the All-Russian Societies. Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities were divided into fee-based and free-of-cost. Thus, rehabilitation opportunities in the form of labor and vocational rehabilitation significantly expanded, but new economic barriers also appeared.

With the adoption in 2004 of the Law on "Monetization of Benefits" the integration of a person with disability into society became largely dependent on their individual economic situation. This approach did not contradict the UN documents on the rights of persons with disabilities, where a disabled person's self-adaptation to market conditions was valued more than state-supported integration. However, the All-Russian Societies perceived this marketization trend negatively because it shifted the distribution of benefits from the state to the market and in doing so decreased the state's targeted support for people with disabilities. The most problematic issue, according to the All-Russian Societies, was the cancellation of tax incentives that had been provided to the All-Russian Societies' enterprises during the Soviet period, which resulted in financial crisis and bankruptcy of many of them. Only one-third of 250,000 jobs provided by the All-Russian Societies' enterprises remained allocated to people with disabilities. Half of the quota jobs for people with disabilities have been lost since 2014 (Topilin 2010). The All-Russian Societies sought financial stability and therefore preferred an annual budget allocated for their enterprises providing employment for persons with disabilities, and thus they were lobbying for targeted state financial support. This state financial support was eventually achieved in 2006. Such financial support from the state is not an exception in international practice. However, the All-Russian Societies depended on their annual state funding for the implementation of the minimum statutory activities, while other NGOs were forced to compete for public funding.

Having resolved the financial issues, the three organizations actively participated in formulation of the third Federal Program "Social Protection of People with Disabilities". This program, implemented between 2006 and 2010, was intended to complete the tasks set out in previous programs. The program's total budget was 3,842.9 million rubles, and 59 percent of this amount (i.e., 2,268.7 million rubles) was allocated to support specialized commercial enterprises employing people with disabilities (Smirnov and Smirnov 2019). It is a small amount compared to the overall social policy expenditures, which totaled 201.2 billion rubles in 2006 and increased

to 344.9 billion rubles by 2010.[5] Nevertheless, this is an example of a successful impact of the All-Russian Societies on the government in terms of creation of additional jobs for people with disabilities. This also shows an increase of domestic NGOs' participation in the implementation of disability policy. The position of the state benefited the All-Russian Societies and even pleased international actors, because the idea of increasing domestic NGOs' participation in disability policy was popular among international NGOs.

Facing market changes and forced to compete for public resources, the All-Russian Societies continued their lobbying for distribution of state resources that would be more beneficial for them; for example, they were reviewing the experiences of internationally recognized organizations and their views on disability policy. The role model for the All-Russian Societies was Rehabilitation International (RI)—an organization of people with disabilities, service providers, government agencies, academics, researchers, and advocates sharing the goal of improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities.[6] All-Russian Societies have gradually built relationships with RI to foster international partnerships, promote international norms in Russia, and search for new funding opportunities. After Russia signed the Convention in 2008, the All-Russian Societies started promoting the specific articles of the Convention in Russia that might be beneficial for them, such as providing for persons with disabilities access to public housing programs or additional rehabilitation equipment, encouraging employment in the private sectors, as well as expanding existing benefits for organizations. Another significant result of the work of the All-Russian Societies was their participation in the development of the 2007 draft Federal Law "On Amendments and Additions to the Federal Law 'On Social Protection of People with Disabilities in the Russian Federation' and Some Other Legislative Acts," which aimed at changing some legal norms affecting persons with disabilities. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the law changed the basis on which disability was defined—from medical to social interpretation of disability—as well as the method of determining it.[7] In 2009 the All-Russian Societies lobbied for the adoption of the Federal Law No. 213 that established a three-tier system of pensions for people with disabilities depending on the degree of disability.

The All-Russian Societies also lobbied to increase differentiation of social services within the established medical programs of rehabilitation and to improve individuals' ability to receive social services separately from the state's prescribed services based on their disability group in order to provide more individualized support

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[5] "Federal'nyi zakon ob ispolnenii federal'nogo biudzheta za 2006 god," accessed June 18, 2021, http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&link_id=16&nd=102121104.

"Raskhody federal'nogo biudzheta za 2010 god po razdelam, podrazdelam klassifikatsii raskhodov biudzhetov," accessed June 18, 2021, https://base.garant.ru/12190566/7dede6ac8f25be619ed07c17ed1c62c9/#friends.

[6] Website of Rehabilitation International, "About RI Global," accessed June 20, 2021, http://www.riglobal.org/about/.

[7] VOI, "Osnovye sobytiia i meropriiatiia Vserossiiskogo obshchestva invalidov, 2006–2011," accessed December 14, 2021, https://www.voi.ru/o_nas/otchety.

and care. At the end of 2009 experts from the All-Russian Society of the Disabled produced a detailed analysis of the draft Concept of the State System of Medical and Social Examination and Rehabilitation of Disabled People. A significant number of the norms included in the Concept were later included in the draft State Program "Accessible Environment for 2011–2015." Furthermore, the organizations analyzed five versions of this state program and provided detailed written comments and suggestions for all of them. Eventually, however, only easily realizable and low-cost suggestions of the All-Russian Societies were accepted by the government. The criticism offered by the All-Russian Societies can be seen in annual documents of the All-Russian Society of the Disabled;[8] however, lobbying for new legislation was performed in a unified manner by all of the three organizations which acted as experts of disability policy.

The second phase of state-NGO relations was characterized by the stabilization of state support for the All-Russian Societies. However, it also marked the beginning of contradictions associated with bringing Russian legislation closer to the international norms included in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2010–2016: STRENGTHENED ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL NORMS IN RUSSIAN DISABILITY POLICY AND CONTESTATIONS FROM TRADITIONALIST NGOS

The third phase of interactions between traditionalist NGOs and the state corresponds to the period of preparation for and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Russian Federation. Despite significant changes in Russian legislation, such as more awareness paid to exclusion of people with disabilities and their rights to education and medical rehabilitation, there was a growing dissatisfaction among the All-Russian Societies with the government ignoring many of their proposals. The All-Russian Societies were beginning to criticize how the state supported people with disabilities and how it handled their requests for clarifications about this support.

The main contestations were related to problems of education and employment of people with disabilities. The All-Russian Societies occupied a position that fell between the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Russian legislation. Referring to the inclusive norms of the Convention, these organizations sought to decrease legislative initiatives focused on economic effectiveness and market competition. According to a representative of the All-Russian Society of the Blind, Oleg Smolin (2012), while the Soviet system was egalitarian and aimed at ensuring equal opportunities, the contemporary one has become elitist, with the rights for education and work increasingly dependent on class positions or financial status of persons with disabilities.

Since the ratification of the Convention, the All-Russian Societies have made criticisms that have led to changes in 40 federal and 750 regional legislative acts

[8] VOI, "Otchety," accessed December 14, 2021, https://www.voi.ru/o_nas/otchety.

relating to disability. Most of these changes were concerned with the creation of an accessible environment and opportunities for learning and employment of people with disabilities. In 2013 the All-Russian Societies introduced amendments to legislation that would empower federal agencies to require that employers equip workplaces for the employment of persons with disabilities taking into consideration their disabilities and needs, as well as legislative obligations for employers to equip a certain portion of workplaces for persons with disabilities. In 2013 the organizations also succeeded in making changes to the Aviation Code of the Russian Federation to eliminate violations of the rights of people with disabilities to use air transport.[9] Three years earlier, representatives of the All-Russian Societies participated in the development of the draft law "On Education in the Russian Federation"; their recommendations for the legislative regulation of education for children with disabilities were partially accepted. In addition, since 2009 the All-Russian Societies have been lobbying for making polling places accessible, as well as the creation of information brochures about elections for people with disabilities. An additional strategy of the All-Russian Societies to avoid redistribution of benefits involved opposition to the Federal Program "Accessible Environment 2011–2015." The All-Russian Societies contested both ideas and interests behind this program. They presented their own proposals, such as development of street infrastructure in the regions and provision of transport for people with disabilities. The government, however, accepted only some of their proposals, for example those regarding the development of public facilities of social, engineering, and transport infrastructures, while other proposals were ignored.

Within the framework of the Federal Program "Accessible Environment 2011–2015," the All-Russian Societies were trying to influence the cofinancing of the programs for people with disabilities implemented by public organizations. They lobbied for the reduction of the legislative requirement for public organizations to provide financial guarantee—at least 50 percent of funding from public organizations should be spent on their projects. These proposals were not supported by the government. The All-Russian Societies criticized the government strategy to remove scores of people with disabilities from governmental statistics by providing them with technical assistance and successful implementation of state programs. The organizations reported that changes in the state's medical and social practices of identification of disability resulted in a decrease in the official number of people with disabilities. Another area of contestation related to the priority for persons with disabilities to receive state assistance in housing-related issues. During the extension of the state program until 2020, this problem remained unaddressed. As a result, the accessibility of residential premises is strictly regulated only in new housing complexes. The government also ignored the amendments that the All-Russian Societies proposed to the program "Accessible Environment 2011–2015" with regard to the creation of interregional rehabilitation centers in each federal district, as well as the development of

[9] Zakonoproektnaia deiatel'nost' Gosudarstvennoi Dumy RF po podderzhke invalidov, accessed June 21, 2021, https://www.vos.org.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1128:2013-05-23-05-02-38&catid=59&Itemid=261.

the All-Russian Societies' medical enterprises and sanatoriums in southern regions of Russia. The proposed amendments reflected the All-Russian Societies' interest in improving the conditions of institutions for rehabilitation and convalescence owned by these organizations. For this purpose, the organizations proposed an increase, up to 1 million rubles, of the amount for purchases without tender, if the supplier is an enterprise owned by the All-Russian Societies. These regulations, however, were not included in the government program.[10]

Similar struggles are also visible in the case of the 2013 Federal Law No. 442 "On the Basic Social Service of Citizens in the Russian Federation." The All-Russian Societies of the Disabled People promptly responded to changes in the draft federal law and criticized the government's idea to consider the family composition (specifically, the number of immediate family members) in order to redistribute the provision of social services to relatives of people with disabilities. According to the organizations, the government wanted to "save money" by providing social services for persons with disabilities through their relatives or family members for a lower fee. The organizations criticized the means testing of per capita income that might limit the provision of a number of social services, together with the legislative act that, under certain conditions, allowed a child with disability to receive social services only after paying a fee. Overall, the All-Russian Societies were critical of the provision of state services in exchange for any fees paid by persons with disabilities. But they also opposed the law for another reason. Federal Law No. 442 has contributed to both the marketization and decentralization of social services, which has become a big problem for the All-Russian Societies that traditionally had the monopoly in the field of disability services, competing only with state agencies. After the adoption of Federal Law No. 442, these organizations had to operate in a market of social protection services. One of the particularities of the All-Russian Societies, as noted by Irina Grigoryeva, Irina Sizova, and Anastasia Moskvina (2019), is that they believed that NGOs, as social institutions, should assist the state in addressing social problems. Thus, NGOs could be active in spheres where bureaucratic mechanisms do not allow state structures to quickly respond to certain social problems. Many representatives of the All-Russian Societies, as well as government agencies, believe that many other NGOs behave like commercial organizations; in other words, they obtain profit through provision of "profitable" innovative services. Consequently, the provision of other, low-cost and unprofitable, services remains on the shoulders of state institutions and the All-Russian Societies. This view does not take into account some privileges that the All-Russian Societies enjoy: rent-free premises, state-provided equipment, and stable salaries for their employees. Their negative attitude toward commercialization of social services reveals a lack of understanding of principles of the NGO work, as well as a fear of unstable work conditions and possible competition from commercial organizations (Grigoryeva, Sizova, and Moskvina 2019).

[10] VOI, "Osnovye sobytiia i meropriiatiia Vserossiiskogo obshchestva invalidov, 2006–2011," accessed June 23, 2021, https://www.voi.ru/o_nas/otchety/osnovnye_sobytiya_i_meropriyatiy.html.

Between 2015 and 2016, the All-Russian Societies defended their interests through proposing important amendments and minor changes to legislation, which resulted in the adoption in 2014 of Federal Law No. 419, which envisages the consolidation of the norms of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the form of social benefits provided to persons with disabilities. The All-Russian Societies, when contesting Russian legislation, did not approach any international organizations for mentoring and support in their negotiations with the Russian government. Even at public events with the participation of international actors, the All-Russian Societies strived to present the best domestic practices and success stories without entering in discussion with and seeking expertise from international partners. The societies do not consider international actors as the main partners, because the All-Russian Societies are realistic and pragmatically collaborating with the Russian federal government and regional executive authorities. They prefer to cultivate the already established relationships in order to prevent renegotiation of the state support for the benefits.

This phase revealed a multiplication of contradictions between the ideational and material interests of the All-Russian Societies, striving to preserve and even strengthen their financial position, as well as the well-being of their members, and the state, which opted for rapid changes in legislation toward the introduction of market-driven competitive mechanisms of provision of social services for people with disabilities.

2016–2021: STAGNATION OF IDEATIONAL CONFLICTS AND RESHAPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

The last phase is characterized by decreasing contradictions between the interests of the All-Russian Societies and the state, and these organizations' gradual adoption of principles of new public management of the contemporary Russian social policy. After long-term attempts to criticize the state and influence changes in the redistribution of social benefits, the All-Russian Societies realized the necessity of playing by the new rules of competition and efficiency. As a result, they reoriented activities from delivering social services to people with disabilities to amending economic legislation and providing advice about the peculiarities of education and employment for persons with disabilities.

For example, in 2017 the All-Russian Society of the Disabled initiated a proposal of the legislative act "On Approval of the Model Regulations of Organizations Providing Social Employment for Working-Age People with Disabilities" that was later adopted by the government. This document was approved as part of the aforementioned "Accessible Environment" program. The proposal attempted to revive state patronage of economic enterprises of the All-Russian Societies at the expense of the executive authorities of the Russian Federation's federal subjects. In 2018 the All-Russian Societies also lobbied for amendments to regional legislation, for example, Saint Petersburg Law No. 55-12 regarding the ability to sign contracts between the

All-Russian Societies and private employment agencies to make employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the accessible environment host organizations.

The enterprises of the All-Russian Societies have already adopted a new method of supporting people with disabilities by organizing workplaces at the All-Russian Society premises for business enterprises and renting premises out to make a profit.[11] The All-Russian Society of the Blind made attempts to promote proposals for the restoration of the status of "small or medium-size enterprises" for the societies and in 2018 lobbied for amendments to the employment law that would improve funding for enterprises with employees with disabilities. Some of these proposals from the All-Russian Societies were accepted by the government. As a result, in 2019, on the proposal of the chairperson of the All-Russian Society of Disabled, the parliament of the Russian Federation conferred the status of small businesses on the enterprises of All-Russian Societies, giving them an advantage in obtaining state contracts without market competition. Moreover, Federal Law No. 185, adopted in 2020, allowed economic enterprises owned by the All-Russian Societies to obtain at least 15 percent of government contracts without open and competitive tender procedures. These examples demonstrate continued existence of the Soviet-era principles of the targeted state support for the All-Russian Societies within the competitive financing principles of the contemporary model of Russian social policy.

Another example is the regular participation of leaders of the All-Russian Societies in the work of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, such as commenting on amendments to federal legislation and promoting the role of the All-Russian Society of Deaf in, for example, provision of services in the field of the Russian sign language. In 2018, there were discussions about increasing the number of technical equipment for rehabilitation and raising pensions for working people with disabilities during official meetings with the highest-level officials of the Russian state.[12]

The latest period, associated with the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021, witnessed amendments that equated the enterprises of the All-Russian Societies to small businesses. The Federal Tax Service accelerated the process of inclusion of the All-Russian Societies' enterprises in the unified state register of small and medium-size businesses, which created additional benefits for these enterprises through collection of new state orders and expansion of their client base.[13] This exemplifies

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[11] "Ob obespechenii dostupnosti uslug dlia invalidov," *Kontakt-Inform SPb VOI*, December 2019, http://voi.spb.ru/files/kinform/ki-2019/kif-12-2019.pdf.

[12] "Vstrecha Dmitriia Medvedeva s predstaviteliami obshcherossiiskikh obshchestvennykh organizatsii invalidov," Pravitel'stvo Rossii, November 21, 2018, http://government.ru/news/34795/#terentev.

[13] "Federal'naia nalogovaia sluzhba obnovila Edinyi reestr sub"ektov malogo i srednego predprinimatel'stva," All-Russian Society of the Disabled, August 11, 2020, https://www.voi.ru/news/all_news/novosti_strany/v_reestr_msp_vneseny_svedeniya_o_predpriyatiyah_s_uchastiem_organizacij_invalidov.html.

All-Russian Societies' lobbying actions that were aimed at improving financial situation of the small businesses owned by people with disabilities.

Collaborative activities with international partners happened in joint events, as reported on the websites of the All-Russian Societies. A recent example is the collaboration in the organization of Rehabilitation International's awards ceremony for outstanding achievements given to individuals and organizations for their contribution to solving disability issues.[14] While such collaboration during awards ceremonies and other events serves to exchange ideas and best practices, it rarely turns into everyday collaborations. Thus, the All-Russian Societies attract international partners to show the Russian government that they are recognized by international actors and that their expertise is highly valued within the international field of disability policy.

The last phase reveals a lack of progress in resolving conflicts between the All-Russian Societies and the state and the former's failure to achieve major changes in its governance of the social policy. It also shows a change in the interests of the All-Russian Societies toward new benefits, for example the implementation of new practices of state orders for enterprises of the All-Russian Societies. The organizations have clearly changed strategy from passing the legislation favoring people with disabilities and implementation of international norms domestically to lobbying for legislative changes and strengthening their own economic status. Nowadays the All-Russian Societies participate in changing current public management legislation for their own benefit, to preserve their material benefits (economic concessions) and spheres of influence (the status of experts).

CONCLUSION

The four phases of the relations between the All-Russian Societies and the state reveal a complex picture. International actors have played a rather insignificant role in shaping the relations between the All-Russian Societies and the Russian government. The essay showed that people with disabilities in Russia are confronted not by an absence of state support, but rather by the continuation of paternalistic and exclusionary approaches: the overconcern of state care and the wrong type of intervention rather than an absence or curtailment of state-provided social protection and support (Rasell n.d.).

This paternalism continues to characterize the interactions between the Russian government and the All-Russian Societies within the contemporary welfare system. The donor-recipient policy model has been traced during all four presented phases. For most of the twentieth century, the All-Russian Societies were monopolists in the disability field in that they dominated both in policy and in practice. When the organizations faced radical changes related to the collapse of the Soviet Union, it made them economically vulnerable. Then,

[14] VOI, "Vruchenie premii i drugie meropriiatiia Rehabilitation International v Rossii," November 5, 2019, https://www.voi.ru/news/all_news/novosti_strany/vruchenie_premii_i_drugie_meropriyatiya_rehabilitation_international_v_rossii.html.

the All-Russian Societies focused mainly on maintaining the paternalistic model of relations with the state and preventing changes that would be disadvantageous to them.

The study revealed that attempts of the All-Russian Societies to influence the distribution of social benefits to increase their amount for the All-Russian Societies and their members are successful under certain conditions. First, this happens when the state lacks developed strategies regarding disability, which could be observed in the first phase of interactions. Second, this happens when the international community obligates the Russian government to include international practices in the state policy toward people with disabilities, as was the case during the formulation of the International Convention. Third, the state does not oppose amendments proposed by the All-Russian Societies when they do not require additional financial or other resources from the state. In other cases, the All-Russia Societies defended their interests less effectively.

The ideational conflict between the All-Russian Societies and state authorities about how to tackle disability has not been resolved. In most cases, the conflict is presented as normative, but it has material bases and revolves around the preservation of spheres of influence. Often, the organizations' actions only contributed to temporary victories or defeats of the All-Russian Societies over the state and did not bring significant improvements in either the Russian third sector or the disability policy.

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НЕКОММЕРЧЕСКИЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ, ПРОТИВОСТОЯЩИЕ ГЛОБАЛЬНОМУ НЕОЛИБЕРАЛИЗМУ: ВЛИЯНИЕ ОБЩЕРОССИЙСКИХ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЙ ИНВАЛИДОВ, ГЛУХИХ И СЛЕПЫХ НА ГОСУДАРСТВЕННУЮ ПОЛИТИКУ В ОТНОШЕНИИ ИНВАЛИДОВ

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Исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке РФФИ в рамках научного проекта № 19-311-90026.

В эссе на примере традиционалистских российских НКО, созданных в советское время и обладающих сложной организационной структурой и оплачиваемым штатом сотрудников, проанализировано влияние отечественных акторов на принятие и регулирование государством международных норм и практик в отношении инвалидности. Российское государство поддерживает общероссийские общественные организации инвалидов, слепых и глухих – вместо того, чтобы способствовать росту независимого третьего сектора, основанного на низовых благотворительных инициативах граждан. Для продвижения собственных интересов общероссийские общества инвалидов (НКО) активно участвуют в разработке российской политики в отношении лиц с инвалидностью и выступают за внедрение и реализацию практик, основанных на международных нормах ратифицированных конвенций. В эссе поднимается вопрос о том, как традиционалистские российские НКО позиционируют себя в процессе принятия государством международных норм и практик, связанных со сферой инвалидности в России, а также как реагируют на государственное регулирование инвалидности в целом. Для ответа на поставленный вопрос были выделены четыре фазы взаимодействия традиционалистских НКО и российского правительства в работе общероссийских обществ в сфере регулирования инвалидности. В тексте использованы материалы контент-анализа российских законодательных актов о социальной защите лиц с инвалидностью, документов, сайтов, социальных сетей указанных обществ и материалы СМИ за период с 1995-го по 2021 год, а также материалы 13 полуструктурированных интервью представителей общероссийских обществ инвалидов и экспертов российского третьего сектора.

Ключевые слова: Россия; благополучие; НКО; социальная защита; инвалидность