Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia

Suvi Salmenniemi

'Dr Salmenniem has produced a compelling, multi-faceted portrait of civic activism in provincial Russia, and an original account of the gender dimensions of civic participation. It should be read by all those interested in the development of civil society in Russia'.

Sarah Ashwin, London School of Economics and Political Science

'Suvi Salmenniemi spent 7 months in the city of Tver′ where she carried out field research and interviewed leaders and activists of civic groups. As a result she wrote this highly qualified scholarly work based on anthropological study of a segment of the Russian civil society.

This book is a major achievement in two research fields: the study of the Russian civil society and the study of the Russian gender order. In both cases we see tensions between new and old discourses, an overlapping of traditional and novel repertoires and focuses on localized and personalized democratic innovations.

Salmenniemi compares two different civic institutions – the old Trade Union of Health Care Workers with its Soviet legacy and the new, post-Soviet Gender Studies Centre. She shows convincingly how differentiated the field of civil society is and how it is structured by the national and local political opportunities providing barriers and openings for civic activism and its interpretations.

This superb study reveals gendered dimension of civic activism, explaining how traditional gender ideologies can justify public participation of Russian women. Women's voices from the interviews reveal that certain types of civic activism is interpreted as part of women's caring.

The research also proves that personalized networks has been the starting point of civic organizations in Russia that later get institutionalized'.

Elena Zdravomyslova, European University at St. Petersburg

Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia

This book examines civic activism, democratization and gender in contemporary Russia. It describes the character and central organizing principles of Russian civic life, considering how it has developed since the Soviet period, and analysing the goals and identities of important civic groups – including trade unions – and the meanings they have acquired in the context of wider Russian society. In particular, it investigates the gender dimensions of socio-political participation in Russia, considering what kinds of gendered meanings are given to civic organizations and formal politics, and how femininity and masculinity are represented in this context. It explores the role of state institutions in the development of democratic civic life, showing how, under the increasingly authoritarian Putin regime and its policy of 'managed democracy', independent civic activism is both thriving yet at the same constrained. Based on extensive fieldwork research, it provides much needed information on how Russians themselves view these developments, from the perspective both of civic activists and of the local authorities.

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Suvi Salmenniemi

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1   Introduction

I travelled for the first time to the Soviet Union, to the Yalta holiday resort, in the 1980s when I was a ten-year-old schoolgirl. The incident that I still remember most vividly from this holiday is how a local woman relentlessly persuaded my mother to sell her new, beautiful sun dress. After several days of 'negotiations' my mother gave in and sold the dress to the woman. I remember having been confused why anyone would want to buy a used dress – why did she not just go to a shop and buy a new one? During the 1980s my contacts with the Soviet Union continued as I got a pen friend, Sergei, from my school's 'twin-school' in the city of Vyborg. Sergei used to send me cassettes on which he had recorded albums of the famous Soviet rock band 'Kino'. The cassettes were always accompanied by an exercise book, in which Sergei had written the lyrics both in Russian and English in beautiful handwriting. These exercise books were my first guide to the Russian language. Later I visited Sergei and his family several times and learned much about Soviet everyday and family life.

I believe these personal experiences of the Soviet Union have played an important role in my scholarly interests. My experiences always seemed to fit uneasily with the Cold War-era hegemonic narratives about Soviet society. Holidays and friendship opened up to me a glimpse of the 'other' Soviet life that was not recognized or discussed in the official discourse either in the Soviet Union or in Finland. My interest in the stories and practices residing outside or in the margins of the official sphere has guided the research for this study, too. Media discourses on post-Soviet Russia have often focused on the centers of power: Putin, the Kremlin, and Moscow. By contrast, this study explores the 'other' Russia outside the echelons of central power and high politics. It examines the logics of civic activity and citizenship and their gendered dimensions at the grassroots level, in the Russian province. It is based on extensive fieldwork conducted in the city of Tver′ in the vicinity of Moscow. The empirical data includes interviews, participant observation and a quantitative survey.

In 2001 when research for this book began, Russian civic activity still appeared to be developing in a promising way. Organizations were springing up, Western and Russian groups were forging collaborative networks and

projects, civil society and democracy were being discussed in a lively and, for the most part, optimistic tone, despite many problems and shortcomings. Western donor agencies regarded the development of independent civic activity as a central element of democracy and distributed a considerable amount of resources to the emerging non-governmental organization (NGO) sector, thus giving a vital impulse to civic activities. Civic groups and the state were taking their first steps on the path of co-operation and were beginning to develop mechanisms of partnership. Despite some problematic tendencies, the civic activists I interviewed in Tver′ in 2001 regarded their future prospects in a predominantly optimistic way.

As I write this Introduction in 2007, the state of Russian civic activity seems very different. The law on civic associations was amended in a significant way in 2006, despite numerous protests and concerns presented by Russian and Western commentators. It tightens up conditions for registration of civic organizations and obliges organizations to report to the authorities in more detail about their activities and funding. It also impedes co-operation with foreign donors and Russian organizations. Foreign support to Russian civic groups has fallen considerably, leaving many groups without any resources to continue their activities.

Civic activity seems to be in a tighter corner than at any time since the collapse of the Soviet Union. When I talked with activists in Tver′ in 2004–5, the mood was disappointed and disillusioned. The cautious optimism that the activists had shared in 2001 seemed to have almost withered away. One activist stated that "Just a bit more and we'll turn into a dissident organization". Another activist compared the work of her organization to "growing flowers in the frost". This metaphor aptly illustrates the current state of civic activism in Russia and also envisions a position of resistance. The environment is not conducive to civic activity, though its roots are struggling to survive in the harsh climate.

This study traces the shifting interpretations and practices of civic activity during the era of President Vladimir Putin's 'managed democracy'. It documents and highlights a historically significant era in the Russian democratization process: the thriving of independent civic activity and the increased state control and pressure towards it. The study sets itself four main research tasks. First, it maps the general logics, practices and structures of civic activity in Tver′. Second, it examines how socio-political agency and citizenship are gendered: how femininity, masculinity and their interrelationships are represented in the context of socio-political activity, and how women and men participate in formal politics and civic organizations. As such, this study engages in a discussion of the gendered dimensions of Russian transformation at large: how gender has articulated the division of labor, power and space in post-Soviet Russia.

Third, this study explores collective identity formation in two different types of civic organizations in Tver′: the *Center for Women's History and Gender Studies* (CGS), a feminist grassroots group that was founded in 1999

and has received funding from foreign donors, and the *Trade Union of Health Care Workers* (TUHW), which was founded during the Soviet era, has a national-level organizational structure and co-operates closely with the Russian state. The study examines how these organizations' members define and represent their organizations and construct their identities, and the meanings they give to their activities. The analysis of collective identities highlights the logics of organizational activities and how these activities are sustained. Finally, this inquiry examines how civic groups and the state interact in Russia. It analyzes conceptions of citizenship, that is, how civic activists and authorities articulate their mutual relationships, and what kind of subject positions, rights and duties they construct for each other.

This work contributes to the study of Russian civic activity, citizenship and gender relations by developing theoretical understanding of these phenomena and their interrelationships based on a closely detailed empirical inquiry. It highlights dimensions of civic activity that have up to now been neglected and provides new methodological and theoretical perspectives for understanding and explaining them. Previous research on civil society and politics in post-socialism, although prolific and lively, has often overlooked the micro-sociological, grassroots perspective and focused on a macro-level analysis of the formal political domain. As a consequence, surprisingly little is known about the perceptions of practitioners of civic activity.[1] This study aims at filling this gap by providing an in-depth empirical analysis of activists' self-understanding and organizational practices at the local level. Examining civic activity through a local case study is important precisely because of the localized nature of civic activity in Russia. There are considerable differences between the regions of the Russian Federation, and in order to understand how civic activity and its dynamics are shaped in these different contexts, studies that address the local developments are needed.

The existing literature on Russian civic activity also has devoted relatively little attention to studying the role of state institutions in determining the conditions under which associational life and democracy operate, although, as will be demonstrated, the state's participation in delineating the boundaries of and opportunities for civic activity is of crucial importance. In this inquiry, the relationships between the authorities and civic organizations and citizenship are analyzed from the perspective of both activists and the authorities.

Furthermore, there are today two separate and seldom intersecting discussions concerning socio-political activity in Russia. On the one hand, there is the 'general' discussion of civic activity that rarely takes gender into account,[2] and, on the other hand, there are several studies about the Russian women's movement and women's organizations.[3] This work is among the first empirical studies that examines both women's organizations and other civic organizations and the experiences and accounts of both male and female activists.[4] The focus is on analyzing *gendering practices* in Russian organized socio-political life and the role of civic activities in the social construction of gender.

Citizens' organizations have been referred to in Russian by a range of notions. The term I encountered most often during my fieldwork was *obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*, which seems to function as an umbrella term for a wide array of citizens' collective activities.[5] Other terms include *obshchestvennoe ob''edinenie* (civic association)*, blagotvoritel'naia organizatsiia* (charitable organization), *nekommercheskaia organizatsiia* (non-profit organization), *nepravitel'stvennaia/negosudarstvennaia organizatsiia* (non-governmental organization), and *tretii sektor* (the third sector). The last three terms emerged in the mid-1990s as translations from English-language terms and were adopted in order to mark a distinction from Soviet organizational patterns (Belokurova 2002, 42).

I refer to citizens' socio-political activity by the terms 'civic activity' and 'civic organization', by which I mean citizens' collective and organized activities, which are not part of the state, although many receive support from it, do not pursue profit and are based on voluntary participation. I have chosen these terms, because they are less burdened by ideological and normative underpinnings and encompass a wider scope of citizens' activity than the terms non-profit or non-governmental organization (NGO) that are often used both in everyday and scholarly discourse. The term non-profit organization is too intimately linked with the American associational model, the so-called third sector, which refers to formal and professionalized non-profit groups that are often engaged in service delivery (see Richter 2000). The term NGO, by contrast, although widely used, is ambiguous and seems to lack a theoretically informed definition – in fact, it is rarely defined at all (Martens 2002, 272). In practice the term NGO has come to refer, as Martens (ibid., 279) observes, to "non-profit but professionalized groups", which links it to the theoretical framework of non-profit organizations. Lewis (2001, 3) has also suggested that the term NGO is, in general, closely connected with the neoliberal vision of development and the so-called good governance agenda, which tends to equate civil society with the third sector. In the post-socialist context, the term NGO has referred to a rather narrow and specific set of institutions, namely, organizations that were founded after the demise of the Soviet Union, which are frequently professional and enjoy foreign funding. NGO-focused research has often overlooked small-scale organizational activities as well as organizations that were established during the Soviet era and still continue their activities, such as Veterans' Councils and the Russian trade union movement.

Understanding the activities of Russian civic organizations requires examining them in relation to the changing forms of state power. The state in this study is defined in terms of 'functions' and 'territory'. Functionally, the state is divided into legislative (legislatures; *zakonodatel'naia vlast'*) and executive (administrative organs; *ispol'nitel'naia vlast'*) power,[6] and territorially into federal (Moscow), regional (federal subjects) and municipal (cities and villages) power.[7] Thus, the state is not a monolith or unitary in its practices, policies or effects, but rather it is "ensembles of institutions

and practises with powerful cultural consequences" (Schild 1998, 97; see also Yuval-Davis 1997, 14).

This study concentrates on studying participants of civic organizations. They can be seen as somewhat exceptional, since citizens in Russia and other Former Soviet Union countries are much less likely than citizens in other countries to join civic organizations. Marc Morjé Howard's (2003) analysis, based on World Value Survey data about the membership of civic organizations, reveals that Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union have notably lower average numbers of organizational memberships per person in comparison to Central and Eastern European countries. In Russia, only 35 percent of the population reports belonging to at least one civic organization (Kubik 2005, 110). All post-communist societies have a much lower level of civic participation in comparison to older democracies and post-authoritarian (Latin American) societies. Studying the people who are actively engaged in civic activities in Russia can provide information about which social groups are represented in socio-political life (gender, social class, etc.), and what types of discourses, ideals and practices are publicly articulated and promoted. This type of analysis also tells us what motivates people to act in an environment marked by a general withdrawal from socio-political activism, and how this activism is structured and sustained.

Theorizing civic activity: civil society

Research pertaining to civic activity in post-communism has been dominated above all by civil society theories. Civil society has become a key signifier of the democratization process, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have frequently been considered as its main agents and manifestations. This chain 'NGOs = civil society = democracy' can be referred to as 'civil society orthodoxy' – so influential has it become amongst scholars and in democracy aid programs.[8] In particular international donor agencies and market-oriented liberals have tended to perceive civil society as liberating and empowering, facilitating democratization and bringing about all manner of good to post-socialist societies (Hemment 1998). By contrast, a number of critics have seen civil society and democracy aid programmes to Russia as a way for the West to colonize the East and they have represented civil society as a foreign idea imposed on the post-socialist world by external forces (Sampson 2002b; Mandel 2002).

The post-Soviet period has witnessed a bourgeoning of empirical and theoretical research on civil society that addresses the question of whether there is civil society in Russia or not. If civil society exists, what is it like and how should it be understood, measured or conceptualized? What are the institutions that Russian civil society is built upon? Is civil society a fruitful concept in the Russian context, or would some other term be better? And indeed, what is 'civil society' and how is it to be defined? In this discussion, the West has operated as a self-evident point of reference, as 'Westernness'

can be seen as built into the historicity of the concept of civil society: Russia (and other non-Western societies) functions as the 'Constitutive outside' (Butler 1993) of civil society. I also started this research with civil society theory, but during my fieldwork I realized that it fitted uneasily with the social reality faced in Tver′. It did not help me to understand how the Russian organizational sector operated. In what follows, I will first discuss how civil society has been conceived and the problems of applying it in post-communism. In the next section I will present the theoretical approach that has been adopted in this research to studying Russian civic activity.

We can distinguish two conceptualizations of civil society in the existing literature: civil society conceptualized in terms of *space* – civil society as a distinctive sphere – and *functions* – what tasks civil society is supposed to perform.[9] In practice these dimensions often intertwine, but this analytical distinction is instructive, in particular, for understanding the debate whether civil society existed in the Soviet Union and, consequently, how it could develop and manifest itself in post-Soviet conditions. A standard spatial definition of civil society is that it is a social sphere operating outside the realm of government, business, and the family and embodied in civic organizations (see e.g. Henderson 2003, Howard 2003). It operates with the conceptual pair of private and public spheres. The public–private dichotomy has traditionally referred to two distinctions: the state versus society (public vs. private ownership), and the state and society versus the domestic sphere. In the first distinction, civil society is placed in the private sphere and in the latter in the public (Okin 1991, 68). This points to the context-bound nature of civil society.

A functionally oriented civil society theory is presented, for example, by Foley and Edwards (1996). They distinguish between two versions of civil society, 'Civil Society I' and 'Civil Society II'. Civil Society I draws on the intellectual traditions associated with Alexis de Tocqueville and Robert Putnam and emphasizes associational life as a facilitator of patterns of civility in the actions of citizenry, cultivating norms of reciprocity, trust and democracy. Civil Society II, by contrast, refers to the Eastern European intellectual tradition that draws on the Gramscian notion of counter-hegemony and sees civil society as a sphere independent from the state and defending the individual against it. The first civil society model emphasizes the positive effects of associational life for governance, while the second model stresses the conflictual potential of civil society as a counterforce to the state.

The difference between 'space' and 'function' conceptualizations is at the heart of the debate whether civil society structures and practices existed in the Soviet Union or not. Those who contend that some sort of civil society existed in the Soviet Union usually adopt the spatial point of view, whereas those who think that civil society did not exist ground their arguments in the 'function' approach. For example, Rigby (1991, quoted in Alapuro 1993, 197) sees that there were elements of civil society in Soviet society, such as

trade unions, the Komsomol, sport organizations, and composers' and writers' unions. Shlapentokh (1989), for his part, mentions the bard movement, the shadow economy, *samizdat*, and the holiday industry as structures of Soviet civil society. By contrast, L.P. Borisov (1996) argues that there was no civil society in the Soviet Union:

> Some elements of civil society (family, working community, social organizations) can appear … under a totalitarian regime as well, but the lack of necessary conditions that could ensure the independence of those elements from political power and their right to self-governance and independent activity makes it impossible to consider a society a civil one. (quoted in Pursiainen 2004)

Thus, although alternative social spheres that were somewhat independent from state control existed, they cannot be said to have constituted civil society, because they lacked independence and autonomy from the state and the ability to exert sustained and organized pressure on it. Kharkhordin (1998, 961) observes in a similar vein that "civil society makes sense only if it includes individual freedom". That is why, he argues, Soviet collectives cannot be regarded as institutions of civil society.

I have identified three prominent approaches to understanding post-communist civil society in contemporary scholarly literature: evaluative, theoretical and empirical-comparative. They are based on different intellectual roots and methodologies and consequently suggest different research programmes and understandings of civil society in Russia.[10] The *evaluative approach* has been popular in particular in studying the effects of Western democracy aid to Russian civic organizations. This approach is usually linked with the spatial conception of civil society and focuses on NGOs. It approaches civic activity from a so-called neo-Tocquevillean (Henderson 2003) perspective and aims at assessing and measuring Russian civil society. Is there a civil society and what is its level of development? Has this development been a success or a failure? In this type of evaluative approach Western, most often American, associational life and the third-sector model are taken as the starting point and the Russian organizational field is measured against it. A good example of such an approach is Sarah L. Henderson's study *Building Democracy in Contemporary Russia: Western Support for Grassroots Organizations*. Henderson (2003, 1) states her task to be to "assess the degree to which Western assistance can facilitate the emergence of civil society, and ultimately, democracy in countries where domestically such impulses are nonexistent or weak."

Although this evaluative approach has provided interesting and important insights into the field of Russian civic organizations, it has failed to explain the civic sector's *own* logic of activity, as seen by the activists themselves, and the meanings that inform and underpin this organizational logic. In the evaluative approach, we often find, as in Henderson's study, that

Russian civic activity does not fit the third sector or neo-Tocquevillean model, but operates according to a different logic. Henderson does not, however, seek to explore and explain this different logic, but is content simply to state that it does not comply with this model. This clearly reveals the normative dimension in the evaluative approach. Russian civic activity is always measured against the Western (and frequently ideal-typical) norm instead of trying to discover which model would best describe how 'actually existing' Russian civic activity operates. The evaluative approach, although interested in activities and actors, does not probe the ways actors make sense of their activity and signify it.

The *theoretical approach*, exemplified by Vadim Volkov and Oleg Kharkhordin, tries to formulate an alternative theorization of and research program for studying civil society based on Russian history and culture. Representatives of this approach contend that Western-based understandings of civil society are insufficient and unsuitable for understanding Russian civil society. This approach combines elements from both the spatial and the functional approaches. Kharkhordin (1997; 1998) bases his argument on Charles Taylor's distinction between two traditions of civil society in Western philosophical and political thought: the so-called L-stream and M-stream.[11] These streams are organically connected with religion, the L-stream with Protestantism and the M-stream with Catholicism. Kharkhordin attempts to construct an 'O-stream' by conceptualizing a Russian civil society based on the traditions of Orthodox Christianity. In mapping religious roots of civil society conceptions, Kharkhordin and the authors he cites focus on congregations, clergy, monasteries, semi-secular brotherhoods and confraternities. However, these practices and structures are mainly, if not entirely, male-centered, yet the implications of this in terms of gender are omitted in the analysis. Kharkhordin's 'religious genealogy' of civil society could be read in two ways. First, it can be seen to make manifest the androcentric history of civil society – it is built upon the writings of male philosophers and on male-centered practices. Second, one could argue that this 'history' could be also told as 'herstory': civil society development and conceptions, based on religion, could also be told by taking into account women's agency. Writing this type of genealogy of civil society would require the explicit scrutiny of women's religious agency, not only brotherhood networks and monasteries. Women have always been active practitioners of religion, although they have been marginalized in the official structures and denied access to the priesthood. Kharkhordin's analysis fails to take into account women's agency but instead reproduces a fallacious androcentric history of civil society – genealogy told according to men and their agency. Kharkhordin's analysis, although predominantly a historical inquiry, also has important implications for understanding contemporary civil society. If this androcentric framework is adopted as a starting point for analyzing the contemporary Russian civic sphere, it will not be possible to 'see' women's agency and those women's networks and

practices that are an integral part of civil society. In this respect, it does not offer an adequate framework for investigating the formation of civil society.

Vadim Volkov (1997; 2003) has suggested that civil society is best understood not as a formal set of institutions outside the state but rather as a shifting historical relationship between certain forms of public life and economic practices. Civil society is a local tradition of social life independent from the state and serving to protect individuals. According to Volkov, the Russian translation of the term civil society (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*) has operated rather as an inspiring symbol in political struggles than a fruitful concept for scientific analysis. Volkov does not question the applicability of the concept of civil society in Russia *per se*, but rather sees it as having been inadequately translated. Instead of *grazhdanskoe obshchestvo* he proposes the term *obshchestvennost'*, which, in his view, best captures Russia's historical ideal and practice of civil society. Unlike *grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*, *obshchestvennost'* has "a historical tradition of usage with reference to the ideas of citizenship and public participation" (Volkov 2003, 65). The term *obshchestvennost'* was first introduced in Russia in the eighteenth century and resurfaced again in the nineteenth century among literary critics and intellectuals of middle-class origin. In the current usage, *obshchestvennost'* refers to public opinion and to an imagined collective agent or a concerted social action. (ibid., 66–69). Volkov's analysis of *obshchestvennost'* is interesting, but as he focuses on a genealogical outline of *obshchestvennost'*, it remains open what this perspective might mean in terms of empirical inquiry in contemporary Russia.

Chris Hann (1996; 2002), although he does not study Russian civil society *per se*, has presented important critical views about the civil society theory in the post-socialist context. He has suggested that the 'standard' Western civil society model is not necessarily the model that best captures the logic and structure of post-communist civil society, but it may build upon different kinds of social practices and institutions (see also Kubik 2005, 120). Drawing on the spatial approach, he suggests that the concept of civil society

> needs to be broadened, relativised and adapted to local conditions. If this is done, 'civil society' can remain a useful general term to designate a broad flow of social activity (…) between the domestic sphere on the one hand and the state on the other, but not sharply separated from either of these. (Hann 2002, 9)

Hann criticizes the civil society debate for having been too narrowly circumscribed by Western models of liberal individualism and sees that "the exploration of civil society requires that careful attention be paid to a range of informal interpersonal practices which were of central importance in state socialist societies and are still in post-socialist societies" (1996, 3).

Marc Morjé Howard (2003) has proposed a competing view to Hann's argument. Howard's approach to civil society can be called *empirical-comparative.* He suggests that civil society can be operationalized and measured empirically according to certain common standards, which can be used to compare different countries in order to understand and explain why civil societies differ historically and culturally. He opposes Hann's suggestion to broaden the definition of civil society so that it would include informal practices, because it would only increase the confusion surrounding the definitions of civil society. Instead he proposes operationalizing civil society for the purposes of comparative empirical research as citizens' membership and participation in voluntary organizations, thus adopting the spatial conceptualization of civil society. Unlike the evaluative approach, this approach has a comparative element explicitly built into the analysis. However, the empirical-comparative approach suffers from the same problem as the evaluative approach in that it cannot catch those practices of civil society that lie outside participation in voluntary organizations. Howard does recognize this problem and suggests that in parallel with the comparative civil society operationalization, one should also study in what other ways people (do not) participate and organize.

Theoretical framework of the study

In this book, civil society is not applied as a theoretical framework to studying civic organizations, due to the problems and shortcomings discussed above. When I started the research for this book, I saw civil society as a general 'umbrella concept' with which to theorize civic activity, but I gradually became increasingly dissatisfied with the concept and its theoretical underpinnings. I seemed to end up with a circular argument: I would study civil society – civic groups – with civil society theory. The heavy political and normative baggage of the concept and its "acute definitional fuzziness" (Edwards and Foley 1998, 3) also seemed to reduce the analytical value of civil society. Furthermore, as my fieldwork progressed I felt that the gap between Russian empirical reality and civil society theorization was increasing and the dialogue between them ever more difficult to maintain. My primary interest was to identify the characteristics of Russian civic activity and understand the actors' signifying practices, but civil society theories had very little to offer for this purpose.

As civil society did not turn out as a fruitful framework for my study, I began to search for other tools with which to theorize civic activity. The following frameworks, linked with each other in many ways, run throughout this study as analytical red threads: micro perspective; discourse analysis;[12] Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital; gender perspective; identity formation; and citizenship. These approaches operate on different analytical levels and function as prisms that help to highlight and explain dimensions that civil society theory cannot adequately take into account. Together they contribute, I propose, to a better understanding of the logics of civic activity in Russia.

Micro perspective to organization

At the end of the 1990s, an epistemological and methodological shift took place concerning the sociological study of post-socialist societies. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the so-called transition paradigm, with its teleological and evolutionary perspective and emphasis on macro-level generalizations and on structures over actors, had dominated our understanding of the processes taking place in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. However, the thwarted development in Russia and some other parts of the region, which resembled less and less the theoretical model of transition, forced researchers to rethink the transition paradigm and find new ways to conceptualize social change and its conditions in the region.

By the end of the 1990s, a number of books and articles had been published that critically reviewed the transition paradigm and its focus on macro-level analysis. One of the most influential addresses in this respect is an edited anthology by Burawoy and Verdery (1999) entitled *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World*. The authors challenge the prevailing transition narrative and argue that it has neglected the "micro-world of day-to-day life". Berdahl (2000, 3) has also argued in a similar vein that "what is missing from these macro-level perspectives is not only an attention to local texture and on-the-ground experience, but also the kinds of challenges to certain generalizations, conclusions, and categories of analysis that an acute sensitivity to detail can provide". Ethnography has been raised as a particularly fruitful approach to scrutinizing this local texture and micro-world practices in the period of institutional instability that characterize much of the post-Soviet space (Hann 2002; Assmuth 2003).

The ethnographically informed micro-level approach brings the questions of power and negotiation to the center of the analysis. It emphasizes human agency, explores the interaction between actors and structural constraints, and focuses upon the 'micro-politics' of everyday life. In this way, micro-level inquiry challenges the exclusive preoccupation with macro-level processes of the transition approach and introduces new concepts and methodological starting points. According to Burawoy and Verdery (1999, 1),

> In conventional portraits of the "transition", the micro is determined or is an expression of structures, policies, and ideologies of a macro character, with little theorization of the unintended consequences brought about locally by political and cultural contestation intertwined with economic struggles.

Here they point to three important requirements: the need to analyze the micro-level world in its own right instead of treating it merely as a reflection of macro-level processes; the recognition that local level and everyday

practices are a meaningful and important site of research; and finally, the need to conceive of social change as a negotiation where structures and actors interact, where (foreign) models and practices, instead of being directly and one-sidedly imposed, are negotiated – moulded, resisted – by actors. Thus, transition is not a unilateral process but rather, as Burawoy and Verdery (ibid.) point out in the title of their book, 'uncertain', filled with hybrid outcomes and unintended consequences.

The key insight in Burawoy and Verdery's conception of the social transformation is to question the relevance of explaining transitional processes only by 'culture' or 'legacies of the past'.[13] Instead they seek to

> [c]hallenge those analyses that account for the confusions and short-comings of the transition process as "socialist legacies" or "culture". Repeatedly, we find that what may appear as "restorations" of patterns familiar from socialism are something quite different: direct responses to the new market initiatives, produced *by* them, rather than remnants of an older mentality. (1999, 1–2)

This is a crucial point, because Russia's social transformation is organically linked with and affected by global political and socio-economic changes, most notably the rise of neoliberalism, which shapes how relations between the public and private spheres and between state and society are organized. Russian socio-economic development has been directed, for example, by the guidelines of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.[14] The same discourses and agendas introduced and propagated by these and other international agencies travel to Russia as they do to practically everywhere in the world. They produce partly similar and partly diverging outcomes and manifestations depending on the socio-cultural context where they are received. This is why it is important to study Russian civic activity, its relationships to the state and its gendered manifestations not only in relation to Russian history and cultural patterns, but also in relation to the global framework. By analyzing how people negotiate structural constraints, adapt to and resist the changes taking place in their lives we can shed light on how the global and the local meet and intertwine, and how macro-level processes, in fact, come about. This enables us to acknowledge human agency and not to conceive of people as prisoners of, or an embodiment of, some essentialist and ahistoric 'Russian mentality' or 'culture'.

This methodological shift in research praxis has also informed the ways in which I have framed my research questions and chosen the methodological tools. This study is interested in investigating the terrain of civic activity at the micro-level: what 'organizing' means, and how and why organizations function. Simultaneously this study is also centrally about the state: I will analyze at close range how the organizational terrain and the practices, actors and structures that emanate from the 'state apparatus' are linked with and affected by each other.

Discourse analytical perspective

The discourse analytical perspective adopted in this study brings the meanings of civic activity to the fore. I seek to identify models and logics of civic activity by studying actors' signifying practices. This focus on meaning-making is indispensable, for if we wish to understand the logic and conditions of civic activity and democracy in Russia, we need to understand and be aware of those social meanings and reasoning that inform it.

Discourse analysis examines in detail how social reality is produced in social practices. Discourse refers to a system of meanings, metaphors and ways of speaking that constitute a particular phenomenon (Burr 2003, 64; Fairclough 1992). A discourse enables one to see a phenomenon from a certain viewpoint and at the same time it limits other ways of representing it. The discourse analytical perspective draws on an ontological and epistemological postulate that there is no automatic correspondence between signifier and signified (Jokinen *et al.* 1993; Scott 1992, 34). This entails that the researcher conducting discourse analysis does not view interviews as reflecting social reality as such, but rather, interviews are approached as informing the ways interviewees understand, categorize and attach meanings to certain topics.

I believe a discourse analytical approach can be particularly fruitful in theorizing civic activity, as the analysis of the concepts and metaphors used and the articulations put forward helps to understand what motivates people to act. Of particular interest in this study is the analysis of those notions that actors use, their "situated vocabularies" that "provide us with valuable information about the way in which members of a particular culture organize their perceptions of the world, and so engage in the social construction of reality" (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, 153–54). I explore how actors articulate their activity: whether they employ 'civil society' (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*), 'the third sector' (*tretii sektor*), or some other terms, and what kinds of meanings these terms acquire, in which contexts they emerge, and what kinds of functions and effects they may have. Thus, 'civil society' does not operate as an analytical concept in this study, but is approached as one possible *discourse* that actors may employ in making sense of their activity. The discourse analytical approach, unlike the evaluative civil society approach described earlier, does not seek to compare how the organizations studied match or attain certain Western models, but to identify *the models that the actors themselves construct*.

The focus upon meanings and discourses is also helpful, because changes in language use and in how different discourses combine under particular social conditions to produce new discourses, and the types of social practices that are connected with these discourses, are an important part of wider social and cultural changes (cf. Fairclough 1992, 4–5). Civic activity is understood in this study as an intersection of the global and the local, and the key task of the study is to examine how global discursive and organizational practices

encounter local ones and the type of negotiation and contestation that takes place at the point of intersection. The hybrids of 'old' and 'new' discursive and organizational practices and the potential tensions between international, 'imported' practices and local traditions are of crucial interest. As Susan Gal (1996; quoted in Hemment 1998) suggests, "as they [concepts and agendas] pass across boundaries of states, political economies and gender regimes they are decontextualized and recontextualized, fitted into other discourses which may change the meaning of arguments". Therefore, the critical task of this study is to analyse the specific local processes of negotiation: how actors adopt or resist 'foreign' discourses and agendas, how they employ them and embed them into the Russian discursive field, and what kinds of functions they have.

Class and capital

In understanding the logic of civic activity in Russia, social class is of central importance. Class conditions and structures access to and agency in civic organizations and civic participation, in turn, (re)shapes the class structure. In analyzing the interconnections of social class and civic activity, I draw on Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1991, 1998) theory of capital[15] and its feminist critique.[16] Bourdieu's theory is helpful, because it allows us to theorize how civic activity is linked with the restructuring of the class structure, creating different opportunities for socio-political participation for different social groups. Bringing social class into the analysis of civic activity contributes to deconstructing the idea of the sphere of socio-political activity as a 'neutral' space not affected by power relations.

Civic activity here is understood to constitute a field in a Bourdieuan sense: a structured space of positions in which positions and their interrelations depend upon the distribution of different kinds of capital (Bourdieu 1998; Thompson 1991, 14). A central property of the field is that one kind of capital can be converted into another type of capital. Capital can be conceived as resources that people use in social struggles (Siisiäinen 2002; Skeggs 1997). They are also context-bound, that is, their contents, relative weight and interrelations vary historically and culturally. Class position is in a Bourdieuan sense understood to be determined by the individual's volume and composition of capital and their relative weight, and the evolution in time of the volume and composition according to their trajectory in social space (Skeggs 1997, 8). This is how capital functions as a mechanism producing advantage and disadvantage in society (Reay 2004).

Bourdieu (1998) distinguishes four types of capital: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. Economic capital refers to money, wealth and property. Social capital refers to social networks and membership in a group; relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.[17] Cultural capital for Bourdieu consists of three dimensions. The 'embodied capital' refers to habitus – dispositions of mind and body that develop as a result of family

and class socialization. The 'objectified' dimension of cultural capital refers to cultural artefacts, such as media, art, etc., and 'institutionalized' cultural capital to the education system and qualifications.

In the Soviet and post-Soviet context, we also need to devote special attention to political capital. It can be understood as a sub-category of social capital (Bourdieu 1998, 27). Bourdieu argues that in France, cultural and economic capital has a lot of weight and forms the central structuring principle of advantage/disadvantage. By contrast, in state socialist societies, such as the Soviet Union, political capital functioned as the most important principle producing inequality. Bourdieu (ibid., 26–28) understands political capital in the state socialist system as something with which a person can ensure private appropriation of public goods and services. In the Soviet system, the creation of political capital was tied to the Party structure and *nomenklatura*: positions in the Party and Soviet societal organizations offered political capital that could be converted into cultural (access to prestigious educational institutions) and economic capital (access to better housing, consumer goods, and trips abroad). In post-Soviet Russia, the nature of political capital has changed, as the all-arching Party structure has collapsed, but it is still of great importance. Political capital in today's Russia is created in networks having access to political decision-making and power.

Bourdieu also identifies a fourth form of capital, symbolic capital, which is the key to the functioning of all the other types of capital. Economic, cultural and social capital become symbolic capital once they are *perceived and recognized as legitimate* (Bourdieu 1991; Skeggs 1997, 8). Symbolic capital exists only in the 'eyes of others' (Siisiäinen 2002), that is, capital has to be regarded as legitimate before it can be utilized and converted in the fields. Symbolic capital is crucially about power: legitimation is, as Skeggs (1997, 8) observes, the key mechanism in the conversion of power. What is perceived and recognized as legitimate, and thus gaining symbolic power, is constantly under struggle in society. Devaluing and delegitimizing certain types of activities blocks their conversion to symbolic capital and in this way (re)produces inequality. Analysis of access to and legitimation of capital and how they are or are not transformed into symbolic capital help to explain how "inequalities are generated and systematic disempowerment engendered" (ibid., 10).

In my analysis of civic participation, I explore how different forms of capital facilitate participation in civic organizations and how they are traded in the civic field. I will show how the changes in the relative weight of capital as a result of the social transformation of the 1990s have opened and excluded different strategies of socio-political participation for different social groups, and for women and men.

Gender perspective

A gender perspective runs as an important analytical lens throughout this book. In social scientific research on 'women' or 'gender' in Soviet and

post-Soviet Russia, gender is often not explicitly theorized and defined. Gender comes then to be used as an unreflected and somehow self-evident category, as if we all would 'know' or share an understanding of what gender means, despite the fact that feminist/gender studies encompasses a range of conceptualizations of gender with different ontological and epistemological underpinnings. That is why it is important to clarify how gender is understood in the context of this inquiry.

I understand gender to refer to the social organization and cultural symbolization of sexual difference (cf. Scott 1986; 2004). Gender is a discursively constituted category and a hierarchically organized asymmetrical social relation that is institutionalized, enacted and lived in social practices. Gender also operates as a crucial signifier of power relations (Scott 1986). Through the process of the constitution of gender society (re)produces normative ideas of what men and women should be and what is considered feminine and masculine (Franco 1998, 280). It is important to distinguish between the cultural symbols 'Woman'/'Man', as the representation of an 'essence' supposedly inherent in all men and women, and the real historical social subjects, women and men (de Lauretis 1987, 9).

The gender system framework informs the analysis of gender relations in this study.[18] It provides a conceptual tool to discuss gender relations at a systemic level, to scrutinize the connections of the civic sphere with other spheres of life and to identify gendered practices at different analytical levels. Gender system theory understands gender to be structured and signified in society at the symbolic, structural and individual (subjectivity, identity) levels, and that gender crucially organizes and structures the social world (Rantalaiho 1994; Liljeström 1996). Thus, gender is understood to be produced and reproduced in distinctive, yet interrelated levels of social reality.

The key methodological starting point in this study is also the idea of 'doing gender': gender is not something one 'has', it is what one *does*, or produces, in social and discursive practices (cf. West and Zimmerman 1987). I analyze the strategies of producing gender relations and identities and the ways subjects and lives are gendered. Gender discourses intertwine and overlap with other discourses pertaining, for example, to ethnicity/'race', sexuality, and social class. These intersecting discourses and the social practices linked to them create a historically and socio-culturally bounded web of subject positions, into which social subjects are positioned and position themselves, and these positionings have powerful real-life consequences. Subjects are 'interpellated' to the subject-positions on offer in various discourses and they inhabit these positions willingly or reluctantly, or try to refuse to inhabit them (cf. Skeggs 1997, 2). This is how gender (and other) identities are constituted: they can be understood as a site of multiple intersecting differences.

My analysis in this study will, first, explore the gendered meanings attached to civic activity and politics, how they are legitimized and how they relate to larger systems of meanings of gender in Russia. Second, I will

study women's and men's practices of participation in civic organizations and institutional politics, in order to scrutinize the link between discourses and practices, the symbolic and structural levels of the gender system. I will also discuss how participation strategies in socio-political activities are affected by the larger socio-cultural context of gender division of labor, welfare policies, and family patterns. Finally, I will examine how gender identities are constructed in the juncture of symbolic representations and material practices, i.e., how civic activists position themselves vis-à-vis and negotiate the gendered meanings and structural constraints of socio-political activities.

Contested identity

In analyzing of the logic of action in the two case organizations, Center for Women's History and Gender Studies (CGS) and the Trade Union of Health Care Workers (TUHW), I make use of the analysis of collective identity. My understanding of identity draws on Stuart Hall's (1996; 1999; 1997) theorization: according to Hall (1996, 2), the question of identity and identification is at the core of the attempt to rearticulate the relationship between subjects and discursive practices.[19] Hall conceptualizes identity as

> the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes that produce subjectivities that construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken'. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us. (Hall 1996, 5–6)

For example, feminist as a shared collective identity in the CGS is constructed in the intersection between public discourses on feminism that persuade the Center's activists to position themselves in relation to those subject positions these discourses offer, and those articulations about feminism that the activists have. In this intersection, we can also find agency taking place, that is, how activists negotiate between 'interpellating' discourses and their own desires and thoughts.

Another strand of research that has devoted attention to identity issues is the study of social movements. Melucci (1995) contends that the construction of collective identity is an integral component of collective action (see also McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Gamson 1991). Eyerman and Jamison (1991, 2) conceive of social movements as forms of activity by which individuals create new kinds of social identities. Identity formation in a civic group or social movement entails the creation of new networks and solidarities, which are an important resource for the activity (della Porta and Diani 1999, 87–88). Identity construction operates according to the logic of

exclusion; identities are constructed in relation to the Other. Collective action cannot happen in the absence of a 'we' that is constituted in relation to positive identifications and to distinctions from something that 'we are not'. In this 'boundary work' (Hunt and Benford 2004, 442), the group names and identifies the collective 'self' and 'other'. When CGS and TUHW activists tell about their activities, they produce a narrative of the group, of 'us', and construct the collective identity of the organization. Hall (1996, 4) also points out that identities are not only or even mainly about 'who we are' or 'where we come from', but 'what we *might become*', how we have been represented, and how that is related to how we might represent ourselves.

Citizenship

Finally, civic activity in this book is approached from the point of view of citizenship. Civic organizations can be conceived as an arena for practising citizenship and a site for the (re)negotiation of citizenship discourses and practices. Organizations provide reflective spaces for individuals wherein citizenship as a political identity can be constructed and collectively reworked and new visions of social order promoted. I define citizenship as membership and participation in a community encompassing relationships between individuals and the state, on the one hand, and between individual citizens within the community, on the other (see Lister 1997, 3; Yuval-Davis 1997, 68).

In analyzing citizenship, I focus in particular upon political citizenship. Political citizenship refers not only to a set of formally defined rights, such as suffrage and right to assembly, but also to individuals' opportunities to participate in and influence socio-political processes and struggles regarding meanings and values in society. I also draw attention to the social dimension of citizenship, because social and political citizenship are interlinked with and affected by each other. Social citizenship refers to rights and access to welfare, which promote the effective exercise of political and civil rights in particular by groups that are disadvantaged in terms of power and resources (Lister 1997, 16).

The question of citizenship has been raised in a new way since the disintegration of the Soviet system. Citizenship in the Soviet Union was constructed primarily in the framework of duties. It was conceptualized as an aggregate of obligations that citizens had towards the state (Avis 1987), despite the fact that Soviet legislation awarded citizens a host of social, political and civil rights. The concept of 'Soviet citizen' formulated during the Stalin era was based on a distinctive All-Union national membership (Ruutu 2006, 76, 106). The Soviet citizenship ideal was embodied in collectives; the interests of the collective always preceded those of the individual. The emphasis on citizens' duties also manifested itself in the communist work ethic: work was considered as a primary duty and as a manifestation

of the patriotism of every citizen towards the Soviet state. Consequently, Soviet citizenship was rather weakly defined in terms of rights, which is characteristic of the liberal citizenship model. This stems from the fact that citizenship rights were handed down from the Soviet state and did not evolve as a result of a grassroots level struggle.

The development of the social and political dimensions of citizenship in Russia has not been linear or concerted. The liberalization of the public sphere has widened the arenas and practices of political citizenship. It has enabled the politicization of identities and interests and guaranteed a right to freedom of assembly and the organization of independent civic organizations. These organizations have introduced new conceptual frameworks to make sense of social problems and social identities together with new mechanisms and practices to organize and tackle them (Zdravomyslova 2005). This can be seen as a new form of practising political citizenship made possible by Russia's social transformation. The parameters of social citizenship, for its part, have been articulated anew in the process of redefining responsibilities between the state, society and the individual. On the one hand, the curtailment of social rights has given rise to poverty and insecurity and has limited the possibility of socio-political participation for many social groups, and thus inhibited the exercise of political citizenship. On the other hand, several social welfare organizations have also been founded as a reaction to the dislocation of the social welfare system brought about by transition. The withdrawal of the state from its previous social obligations has meant that the family, social networks and civic organizations have started to shoulder more responsibility for welfare than before.

Researching the Russian province: field, data and methodology

I conducted seven months' fieldwork for this book in Tver′ during 2001–4.[20] Tver′ was chosen as a fieldwork setting because of my interest in finding out what civic activity was like in those locations that rarely figured in the 'vanguard of civil society' in mass media and research reports.

Tver′ is a provincial city located in Central Russia, 167 kilometres to the north-west of Moscow with 454,900 inhabitants.[21] It is the administrative center of the Tver′ region. Tver′ is an economically deprived region: its GNP per capita in 2004 fell well below the average of the Russian regions.[22] The most important sector of industry in the region is the production of electrical energy. Other important sectors include mechanical engineering, metal and wood processing, the food and textile industry and agriculture. Russian demographic development is bleak, and the situation in Tver′ is no exception. In 2000, life expectancy was 71 years for women and only 56 years for men in the Tver′ region.

The disadvantaged economic position of Tver′ culminates in its crumbling infrastructure. During my fieldwork there were constant breaks in the supply of hot water and heating, which caused much anxiety for the

townspeople, especially during wintertime, and gnawed at the legitimacy of the local authorities. Although the economic situation is depressing and the standard of living low, the Tver′ region has strong intellectual resources. There are several institutions of higher and secondary education located in Tver′. Tver′ is also architecturally beautiful. It suffered from the ravages of World War II, but plenty of old buildings are preserved in the city center. Some of them are beautifully renovated, whereas others, such as the city art museum, have been under repair for many years, without notable progress. In the city center there is a square with the premises of the city administration, central bank and a Lenin statue. The city center is peaceful and rather small considering the population size of approximately half a million. The Volga river cuts through the city and the river banks are a popular site for townspeople to spend time. Plenty of attractive red-brick houses have

Map 1 Location of Tver′

been built recently in the center with '*Evrostandard*' façades, tight security and fences, whereas the old Soviet era blocks of flats in other districts are crumbling. Two big shopping malls were opened lately in the city center with plenty of shops selling exclusive Western goods. Next to the malls, the Russian bazaar economy flourishes with dozens of kiosks and market places. Huge economic disparities are glaringly visible: on the same street corner, one may spot a *babushka* selling woollen socks in order to survive on her negligible pension, a disabled person begging for a few kopecks for bread, and a white Limousine with darkened windows driving in the potholed street.

Interviews and observation

During the fieldwork, I collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data include a representative survey conducted of Tverʹ civic organizations. The survey provides an overview of the civic field and helps to better contextualize the qualitative data. The qualitative data include 58 one-to-one and group interviews, in which there were 70 participants;[23] a number of informal conversations with activists; and field notes about observations in civic organizations. In addition I have used statistics, material that civic organizations have produced about themselves, and official documents to support my analysis.

The core of the qualitative data consists of interviews and observation at the two case organizations: the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies (CGS) and the Tverʹ Trade Union of Health Care Workers (TUHW). These organizations were selected as case organizations because they represent two very different types of organization. The CGS is an openly feminist grassroots group and part of the feminist movement in Russia. It was founded at the end of the 1990s and it collaborates with foreign donors. The TUHW is a successor of the Soviet trade union of medical workers, has a nationwide organizational structure and collaborates closely with the Russian state. Thus, the assumption is that these organizations help to highlight different aspects of civic activity, providing information about how certain *types* of organization, feminist/education-oriented groups and trade unions, operate. The TUHW and the CGS can also be seen as representing two core groups of the Soviet intelligentsia – doctors and university teachers – and their mobilization strategies. They are also both workplace-based organizations, the TUHW uniting health care workers and the CGS teachers and students of the State University. These case organizations were also chosen because of my interest in women's activism; both the CGS and TUHW have a female-dominated membership. To focus on women's activities was a political choice, as a number of mainstream analyses concerning socio-political participation in Russia have ignored women's agency. I wanted to render visible this agency and approach women not as objects or victims of social change, but as its active agents and producers. My interest

in gendering practices in civic activity, however, also led me to pay attention to non-female-dominated organizations and to how men participated in and perceived civic activity.

My reading of the interview data is discourse analytical.[24] In the analysis, I make a distinction between discourse and interpretative repertoire. I use 'discourse' to refer to larger and historically and culturally pervasive articulations; for example, I refer to 'civil society discourse' or 'paternalism discourse'. By contrast, when I analyze the ways the interviewees in my data represent and explain phenomena, I use the notion of 'interpretative repertoire'. Repertoires are more limited than discourses. Discourses and repertoires are in a dialectical relationship with each other. Discourses are 'a toolkit of linguistic resources' (Potter and Wetherell 1987), that is, the total configuration of linguistic resources available in a particular culture at a particular moment that actors may draw on in making sense of issues and constructing repertoires, and these repertoires, for their part, contribute to the transformation of discourses.

The question of agency is central here. I understand agency to be possible, first, in the sense that one can choose interpretative repertoires for making sense and articulating events, although the repertoires on offer are always culturally bounded. Second, agency is possible in repeating discursive practices in a different way; that is, it is possible to negotiate them (Butler 1990; Fairclough 1992). On the one hand, culturally strong repertoires wield compelling power that attempts to interpellate subjects to those positions on offer in them, but on the other hand, people can also choose, combine and invent new repertoires and harness dominant repertoires for the purposes of resistance (cf. de Certeau 1984), recode them and use them as linguistic resources in advancing alternative interpretations. Hall (1997, 270) talks about *trans-coding*: taking an existing meaning and re-appropriating it for new meanings. In the analysis of agency two tasks are of central importance: the analysis of the possibilities of mobilizing the existing configurations of discourse and power and destabilizing existing power regimes (Butler 1992, 13) and the analysis of actors' sense of efficacy: whether they believe that they can act and influence or not (Lister 1997, 38).

The task in this inquiry is to trace interpretative repertoires in the interviews and analyze how they relate to larger socio-cultural articulations. I have analyzed the ways in which the interviewed actors articulate, explain, evaluate and categorize phenomena, and examined the subject positions, spaces of agency and identities these discourses produce for different actors. In conducting concrete textual analysis, my aim has been to identify the *inner logic of a repertoire*: the viewpoint it assumes and the ways in which it portrays relationships between different actors and events. In identifying the repertoires I have used the following tools. First, I have posed my data the following questions: What repertoires are in this particular socio-historical context available, possible and legitimate? Why are certain repertoires more vital and more frequently circulated than others – what kinds of social,

cultural and historical factors can account for this? Second, I have examined what issues actors link together or separate; what kinds of distinctions – identifications and disidentifications – they perform and how; how they represent interrelationships between different entities (for example, masculinity and femininity; state and society; East and West). Third, I have tried to locate silences in the data – what issues tend not to be problematized and taken up – and analyze the metaphors that the actors use. Fourth, I have devoted attention to intertextuality in the data. Interpretative repertoires are not closed systems, but they draw elements from other repertoires and tie them to their own web of meanings (Hall 1999, 100). It is of particular interest how concepts and meanings are circulated, re-coded and transferred to new contexts: how actors draw elements, for example, from Soviet political rhetoric, religious discourse, or Western liberal discourse and embed them into new contexts.[25]

During the fieldwork, I kept a research diary in which I recorded details of the observations and the fieldwork process, in general. I have read these field notes in parallel with interviews. The aim has been to place these two sets of data into a dialogue and to contrast them to each other, and in this way to detect whether there are some interesting contradictions or inconsistencies between them. The value of inquiries combining observation and interview data lies in the fact that they can highlight how contradictions are lived and negotiated and make visible differences between discourses and practices (cf. Skeggs 1997, 32). This parallel reading led me, for example, to observe that in the interviews with the CGS members, a strong emphasis on team-based organization was put forward, but in the field notes, this was contradicted by several remarks and examples about how the CGS's activities were heavily dependent on the leader of the organization. This helped me to begin to consider the negotiation between aspirations for a more democratic and team-based organizational culture, on the one hand, and those various practices that persistently produced leader-centeredness, on the other. The field notes also helped me to re-read the interview data so that observations were not missed on this issue, as well as to further locate the instances of negotiation around this issue.

Survey

The survey (n = 105) was collected from registered civic organizations in the city of Tver′ during 2004–5.[26] The survey sample was drawn on the basis of an organization register.[27] The survey was conducted as personal interviews with the leaders or vice-leaders of organizations.[28] In choosing the sample, stratified sampling was used in order to ensure that different sectors of civic organizations would be represented in the sample. The organizations were classified into nine categories on the basis of their names and then randomly chosen from these categories.[29] The biggest organizational category was social welfare and health care organizations, which reflects the general

organizational situation in Russia (Iakimets 2002; Henderson 2003). The survey data was coded and analyzed using the SPSS for Windows statistical programme. The open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed by thematic reading and categorization.

We encountered several problems in the course of conducting the survey, which convey interesting insights to the practices and characteristics of civic activity. The first problem had to do with the organization register. During my earlier fieldtrip in 2002, I had received a copy of an official organization register by using informal connections.[30] My research assistant and I first tried to obtain access to the copy of this register by contacting the legal department of the regional administration. However, we were told that it was impossible to make a copy of the register, but we would be allowed to read it in the premises of the legal department. It would have been possible to copy the register by hand, but it would have been extremely time-consuming given the over 1,200 registered organizations (both city and region) on the list. We rejected this alternative and turned to the CGS for help. The leader of the CGS had a colleague at the university who knew an official working in the legal department. This official in the end copied the register and handed it to us.

However, when we began to carry out the survey in 2004, this register of 2002 needed to be updated. At first I considered the option of using the old register, but rejected this alternative, because there had been many changes in the organizational field since 2002 and therefore this register was most probably obsolete and would not provide an accurate picture of the field. Neither did the old register include any contact information for civic organizations and was thus not helpful, as it would have been very difficult to locate organizations without an address or telephone number. So we began to hunt down an updated version of the organization register. The first problem was that my research assistants were not sure where to get the register and how. One of them told me that it was better if he tried to request it from the administration; in his opinion, the authorities might think I was a spy. My assistants also thought that it would be better to use informal connections in obtaining the register: the mother of one of my assistants happened to work in the regional administration. Raisa Borisovna, a member of the CGS, proved to be the key person in finally obtaining the much-needed organization register. Her connections allowed us access to the up-to-date list through the chairwoman of a local philanthropic foundation. This illustrates how important informal networks were for conducting fieldwork.

In addition to finding the organization register, we also encountered several other problems during the survey project. First, often real detective work was needed in order to find organizations. The information in the register was frequently incomplete or incorrect. Many organizations did not have an office of their own, but operated out of a private home or met in public buildings, such as the House of Officers (*Dom ofitserov*) or Cultural

Palace (*Dvorets kul'tury*). If the organization did not have an office, it consequently did not have office telephone either. Moreover, even if there was a telephone number written down in the register, it had often changed. If there was only an address for an organization, problems arose again. If it was not the address of the organization's office, then it was the leader's home address. In the latter case, if the interviewer was not able to contact the leader beforehand by phone and agree upon an interview, it was almost impossible to conduct the interview, because people as a rule do not open doors to strangers out of fear of robbery. An unanticipated problem was also the fact that, according to my research assistants, sociologists have a dubious reputation in Russia. At least one organization leader refused to participate in the survey because she did not want to have anything to do with sociologists. Often sociologists are associated with governmental knowledge production and people are therefore reluctant to participate in surveys.

Reflexivity, situated knowledge and ethical questions

In order to enhance the reflexivity throughout the research process, I have elaborated a dialogical model of interpretation for the analysis. This dialogue manifests itself at four interrelated levels. First, interviews and observation can be characterized as embodied encounters between me and the researched during which we exchange thoughts and contemplate and negotiate cultural meanings. Second, they can also be seen as textual encounters between me as an analyst of the data and the interview transcripts and field notes as an interlocutor. The third dialogue takes place between qualitative and quantitative data. Discursive representations put forward in the interviews and field notes describing organizational practices are contrasted and read in parallel with survey data reporting statistical results about civic activity.

The fourth dialogue takes place between so-called Western methodology and the Russian empirical data. I wish to place my conceptual frameworks, which mainly derive from the Western scientific community, into a dialogue with the Russian social reality and Russian conceptual frameworks, and to see how they communicate with each other. Scholars of post-socialism have long debated the limits and possibilities of applying Western theorization to the study of post-socialist societies. Some scholars have argued that it is impossible to apply Western methodology to the Russian context, as Russia is 'different' and cannot be explained by 'Western' models. I find this configuration Western methodology vs. Russia problematic, because it (re)produces a dichotomy, which homogenizes and fixes both Russia and the West. Moreover, this configuration tends to exoticize and 'other' Russia, assuming *a priori* that Russia cannot be incorporated into or discussed in relation to Western-based conceptual frameworks, but rather requires a specific treatment. It is also often unclear what is meant by 'Western theories'; within Western societies there exists a wide range of different theoretical

orientations, which are also frequently hybrid products drawing on several cultural elements and discussions, Western and non-Western alike.

Rather than getting stuck with an unhelpful West/Russia binary constellation, I believe *contextual explaining* is a more fruitful approach. This implies that *all* knowledge production is context-bound and requires the researcher to reflect upon the chosen conceptual frameworks and rethink methodologies, not only when studying Russia or other non-Western contexts.[31] Contextualization is important in order to avoid the abstraction and detachment of knowledge from the conditions of its production. It is also important to note that context never pre-exists the researcher: the researcher does not step into a ready-made context, but s/he actively *produces* the context by discussing his/her inquiry in relation to various socio-cultural and historical factors that s/he deems relevant (Liljeström 2004, 142–47). Contextual explaining can be understood as a practice of *epistemic reflexivity*. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argue that epistemic reflexivitity is a prerequisite and a form of sociological work: scholars should reflect their analytical tools and operations in the process of knowledge production. The practice of epistemic reflexivity urges one to deconstruct the sociological self and scrutinize the very act of construction of the object embedded in theories, problems and categories of scholarly judgement (Pilkington n.d.; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Thus, when I seek to identify the central logics of Russian civic activity, I discuss the Russian case in relation to previous empirical enquiries of certain Western societies, in order to examine whether and how Russian activity is different from or similar to them, and also to place Western conceptual frameworks into a dialogue with my Russian data, in order to rethink their accuracy and generalizability (cf. Rotkirch 2000, 2). In this sense, this book can be seen to be engaged in contrastive research.

Contextual explaining and reflexivity are linked with the idea of 'situated knowledge'. Donna Haraway (1991, 195) has advocated for "politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard and to make rational knowledge claims". Situated knowledge refers to understanding that all knowledge is partial, local, temporal and historically specific (ibid.; Coffey 1999, 11). As Haraway (1991, 196) formulates it, "The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular". Situated knowledge is first and foremost about the embodiment of the 'knowing subject'; in other words, the researcher's gender, age, ethnicity, social class, worldview, among others, affect what and in which ways she/he can know about her/his subject of study. It is inevitable that when the researcher observes activities and interprets data his/her own cultural background and experiences influence what s/he sees and how s/he interprets and understands it. Rather than denying this, the epistemologies of situated knowledge encourage the researcher to take embodiment, contextuality and partiality seriously and contemplate its implications for conducting research. Knowledge is never

'pure'; it is produced in interaction between the researcher and the resear-
ched and the analysis of the conditions of knowledge production is part of
the interpretation process. For example, the way I interacted with the
researched and the way I was able to obtain knowledge and interpret it, was
conditioned and influenced by me being a Finn, woman, feminist, acade-
mically educated etc.

The position of a foreigner undoubtedly facilitated my access to some
organizations and the authorities during the fieldwork. Some organizations
were willing to participate in the study, for example, because they were
interested in finding a co-operation partner from Finland. My research
assistants also were of the opinion that I benefited from my foreigner's
position in relation to the authorities, as they would not meet, much less
give an interview, to Russian researchers (cf. Hemment 2007). However, the
position of foreigner is also ambivalent. My assistants communicated that
when they carried out interviews for the survey, participants in general were
well disposed to the project, because it was conducted with a Finnish
researcher. In the assistants' view, had I been an American, it would have
been much more difficult to encourage people to participate. It also came to
light that Finland did not often appear to be strongly identified with the
'West'. This can derive from the fact that Finland was until its independence
part of the Russian empire, as well as from Finland's neutrality politics
during the Cold War. Finland and other Nordic countries were also occa-
sionally represented in the interviews as kind of 'ideal societies', because of
their welfare state model and governmental gender equality policies. Fin-
land thus functioned as a point of comparison in the interviews, as people
contemplated their own society in relation to it.

Feelings are of analytic importance during fieldwork and their analysis is
an integral part of reflexive research praxis. Feelings can provide essential
information about the social structures and practices in the studied com-
munity. The reactions of distaste, sorrow, fear or bafflement provide clues to
sensitize the researcher to various socio-cultural boundaries that shape the
life of those studied. These feelings also can lead one to critically con-
template and make visible one's own unreflected, unconscious expectations
and normative mindsets. For example, during the fieldwork, I felt dis-
comfort in the Russian gender system that I found more rigid than the
Finnish one. I was frequently confused and annoyed by the essentialist
interpretations of gender relations that I seemed to encounter in Russia
more than in my own society. These feelings led me to contemplate the dif-
ferences and similarities between Russian and Finnish gender systems and
also helped me to reflect upon my own understanding of gender relations.

My role as a participant and an observer turned out to be different in the
CGS and TUHW, which also shows in the analyses of these organizations
in the forthcoming chapters. I was able to have a closer and more partici-
patory role in the CGS, because of our common interest in feminism, the
CGS's profile as a research center and of its Western orientation. The

co-operation was mutually beneficial: I was eager to become acquainted with the Center and the members of the Center were interested in Nordic feminism. I could also contribute to the activities of the CGS, for example, by obtaining literature, helping to find funding and delivering lectures.

The TUHW was a more unfamiliar context for me and I was less involved in its activities than I was in the CGS. I had little knowledge about trade union work and health care system, which hindered my participation in the TUHW. My position as a feminist academic did not facilitate participation in the TUHW in the same way as it did in the CGS. The observation I made in the TUHW was more limited than in the CGS, which was also partly due to the different practices in these organizations. The CGS's activities were often informal and focused on the areas of my expertise – gender studies and education – which made it easier for me to have a participatory role in the group. By contrast, the TUHW's activities consisted mainly of formal meetings and negotiations, in which my role was more detached.

Furthermore, the different interpretations of the past and present in the CGS and the TUHW affected my interaction with them. The whole existence and activities of the CGS had been made possible by the social transformation and the Center had been able to make use of the new opportunities opened by it. By contrast, the TUHW tried its best to adapt itself to changes that many of its activists perceived as detrimental. The deteriorating economic situation in Tver′ directly affected the resources and working conditions in the health care sector, which, in turn, reverberated to the workings of the TUHW. The TUHW was in a crisis situation and sometimes I felt unable to bother the union activists with my research, due to the fact that I saw they had other more pressing things to do. This was accentuated by the fact that the TUHW could not get much tangible reward from participating in the research in the same way as the CGS did.

I was also acutely aware that for the TUHW members I represented the affluent West. They often queried about salaries and working conditions of health care workers in Finland and the contrast between Finland and Russia was taken as a manifestation of the horribly unjust situation of workers in Russia. However, many interviewees also felt a need to point out areas where Russian medical workers could beat their Western counterparts; for example, they were better educated and could make diagnoses without fancy Western equipment. It was emotionally difficult to listen to the despair of the TUHW members when they told about the hardships they had to face in their work and everyday life. The general feeling of helplessness and a lack of positive vision for the future was sometimes difficult to handle in the interview situation. I was able to listen and empathize, but at the same time I did not want to be perceived as a Westerner who moaned about the conditions in which they had to live on a daily basis, because I had noticed that despite the hardships, there was a strong sense of pride among the interviewees. On the other hand, it was important not to seem indifferent towards their hardships.

Fieldwork in the CGS and the TUHW also illuminated the different constraints and opportunities of these groups. The first time I met Valentina Ivanovna, the leader of the CGS, she took me to her home. I paid attention to the fact that she had a nice shelf of books of Western feminist and social theory and a computer with Internet access, a printer and a fax. I gathered that the CGS had good resources to conduct its work. By contrast, when I made my first interview with members of the Tver′ TUHW in one of the city hospitals, I was faced with a totally different picture: a crumbling hospital with an apparently eternal renovation. The group interview took place in the dreary and cold room of the president of the committee of the trade union primary organization (*profkom*). After the interview, one of the interviewees wanted to make a phone call. She tried to dial the number, but the whole dial physically fell off the telephone. She commented to me that someone had just recently asked her whether they use the Internet in the hospital and huffed about how could they even dream about the Internet when even telephones did not work.

There are also some ethical questions that need to be discussed here. In order to protect the anonymity of those who participated in this research, I use pseudonyms in reference to them. There is, however, one exception. I refer to the leader of the CGS, Valentina Ivanovna, by her own name. She is a well known activist both in the West and Russia and thus I cannot render her unidentifiable. I have gained her consent for this. Ethical dilemmas also arise in relation to representing and interpreting the data. During fieldwork, one becomes located in the web of social relations which shape the lives and personalities of all parties involved. Researcher can never remain an 'impartial' observer peaking into the insiders' world (Coffey 1999). Fieldwork inevitably engenders emotional ties and loyalties between the researcher and the researched; for example, some of those who participated in this research became my friends and colleagues. In writing this book, I have grappled with how to write a narrative that is respectful and sympathetic to the researched, without losing analytical rigour and critical intellectual distance, which is indispensable for the work of the researcher (cf. Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, 100–101). I have unravelled this dilemma of emotional attachment and intellectual detachment by placing the empirical data into a dialogue with a set of theoretical discussions. In this way I have negotiated my position as a researcher and as a (temporal) participant in the lives of the organizations and actors studied.

Outline of the book

The next two chapters lay out the central organizing principles and practices of the Russian civic field, which the subsequent chapters deepen with the help of case analyses. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the practices and structures of socio-political activity in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia and the results of the representative survey conducted in Tver′. With the

help of the survey the central characteristics and logics of action of civic organizations will be identified. Chapter 3 analyzes how socio-political agency and citizenship are gendered. It examines the gendered meanings given to civic organizations and formal politics and how women and men participate in them.

Chapters 4 and 5 investigate collective identity formation in the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies (CGS) and the Trade Union of Health Care Workers (TUHW). The chapters examine how organizations are formed and how they function. They identify the goals and repertoires of activity of these groups, their self-identification and those 'others' in relation to whom the identities of the groups are constructed, and the meanings their organizational activities acquire.

Chapters 6 and 7 discuss how local authorities and civic activists represent and renegotiate the relationships between state, civic organizations and citizens. Chapter 6 begins with an overview of public discourses on civic activity and practices of co-operation between the state and civic groups in Russia, and the shifts that have taken place in them during the last decade. After that the chapter presents an analysis of the ways the municipal and regional authorities in Tver′ articulate the roles and tasks of civic organizations and the interaction between organizations and the authorities. Chapter 7 then analyzes the ways civic activists represent their relationships with the authorities, and the types of interaction their organizations have forged with them. It also examines how the activists understand their opportunities for and limitations to influence.

The concluding chapter summarizes the main results and discusses them in relation to the theoretical frameworks of this enquiry. It also discusses the state of democracy in today's Russia and suggests a number of questions that merit further investigation.

2   Patterns of civic activity in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia

This chapter begins with an overview of practices and trajectories of socio-political activity in the Soviet Union. This historical review contextualizes contemporary civic activity and is essential for understanding its development and forms. The second section discusses general characteristics and development trends of post-Soviet civic activity. The third section presents a general view of the civic organization field in Tver′ based on a representative survey conducted among registered civic organizations. It investigates the structures, practices and participants of civic organizations, and identifies the central logics according to which organizations operate. The results from the Tver′ survey are compared and discussed in relation to studies of civic organizations in other Russian regions, enabling the formulation of more general arguments about patterns of civic activity in Russia.

Citizens' activism in the Soviet Union

Independent social movements and civic organizations were not tolerated in the Soviet Union. Instead, all socio-political activity was linked to the party-state and subject to its control. There were societal organizations, such as labor unions, the Komsomol and women's councils, but they operated as party auxiliaries mobilizing the masses to build communism. Officially they were to build upon altruistic work for the benefit of the public, as sacrifice for the common good was the normative Soviet moral requirement (see Kharkhordin 1999, 60). This emphasis on altruism drew on the fact that there could not be any conflict of interests articulated publicly in Soviet society. Organizations could not officially pursue their members' interests, but instead were supposed to represent a mythical community of toilers (*trudaiaschchiisia*) or the people (*narod*) (see White 1999, 42). People were obliged to take part in state-mandated unpaid societal work (*obshchestvennaia rabota*) outside school and the work place that also operated as an instrument of social control.

However, the state's arm did not reach every corner in Soviet society. Alternative social spaces and practices existed that more or less escaped control from above. Elena Zdravomyslova and Viktor Voronkov (2002) have

coined a term *informal public sphere* to describe the dynamic of these alternative settings.[1] According to them, the Russian social order was divided into three spheres: official public domain (party-state apparatus, official collectives and societal organizations), informal public domain (dissident circles, kitchens, ecological and intellectual movements etc.) and private domain (family, kin, friends). The official public sphere was a locus of ritualized activity, whereas the private and informal public spheres functioned as loci of alternative practices and discourses, of creativity and escaping the official system.

The official public, informal public and private domains were connected with each other in many ways and their boundaries overlapped. A distinguishing factor between the domains was their distinctive rules and codes of communication (Zdravomyslova and Voronkov 2002). The informal public was a kind of hybrid of public and private realms, comprising social spaces and practices that were situated in the middle ground of these domains. Activity in the informal public domain was frequently rooted in personal networks – family, colleagues, friends etc. – and often took place outside the private home, for example, in cafeterias and universities. Informal, potentially subversive collectives were also formed within official collectives at universities and the Komsomol (Kharkhordin 1999).

There were also attempts at public independent collective action in the Soviet Union. During the 1950s, dissident communities practised resistance vis-à-vis the Soviet state mainly in artistic milieus of literature journals and art exhibitions. From the 1960s onwards, dissident activity focused on human rights, as a result of severe repression – deportations and imprisonment – targeted against intellectuals and artists by the state (for more detail see Dzhibladze 2005; Urban *et al.* 1997). The protection of fundamental human rights, democratic freedoms and legality remained as the backbone of dissident activity throughout the Soviet period, and also had a profound impact on post-Soviet human rights activism.

In the mid-1980s the political opportunity structures changed significantly with the introduction of *perestroika* and *glasnost'*. In 1986 the Ministry of Justice declared a set of 'Regulations on amateur associations' that made it legal to assemble in public, to organize civic groups and political parties independent of the state and register them with local authorities (Urban *et al.* 1997, 96). The societal climate opened up and offered opportunities to deal with societal problems and conflicting interests of different social groups. Characteristic of the perestroika era were informal groups (*neformaly*) and loosely defined mass movements. These groups and movements were as a rule critical of the party-state and wished to operate independently from it and avoid the Soviet type of bureaucratic and centralized structures. They did not have a clearly defined membership and their actions were often spontaneous (see Hosking 1992; Urban *et al.* 1997; Pilkington 1994). Various self-help and charity groups were founded in the wake of perestroika as a reaction to Soviet state paternalism and endemic problems

in the Soviet welfare state, such as the lack of services and dissatisfaction with their quality, the stigmatized status of disabled people, poverty and the practice of concealing social problems (White 1999). The environmental movement was one of the most influential perestroika-era movements, bringing to light thus far silenced information about ecological catastrophes (Yanitsky 2000; Dzhibladze 2005). Human rights groups were also an integral part of the mobilization wave, and in 1987 one of the most well-known Russian human rights organizations, Memorial, was established. The Soldiers' Mothers social movement also emerged during the same year, as a result of the campaign against the recruitment of university students to the Soviet army (Dzhibladze 2005). Politically oriented civic groups sprang up and in 1988 the first independent political party, Democratic Union, was founded (Urban *et al.* 1997). Women's organization also moved to a new phase in the wake of perestroika. In the Soviet Union, women could not organize outside the Party-controlled women's organizations and publicly challenge the parameters of Soviet equality politics. As the discursive space expanded with perestroika, it became possible to critique the illusion of women's emancipation in Soviet society and discuss publicly such taboo issues as domestic violence, prostitution, abortion, and homosexuality (Buckley 1992). New discourses sprang up and independent, informal women's organizations emerged (see Sperling 1999; Kay 2000).

Basic characteristics of post-Soviet civic activity

It has been estimated that there are about 485,000–500,000 civic organizations in contemporary Russia, but only one fourth of them are estimated to work actively. About 2–2.5 million people work in the civic sector and annually about 30 million people use the services that these organizations provide (Iakimets 2002; Zdravomyslova 2005). The civic sector is regionally diverse (Sevortyan and Barchukova 2002). Civic groups work actively in urban centers, but in the countryside there is less organized socio-political activity.

The development of the Russian civic sector has been periodized in many different ways. In my view, the best periodization is provided by Brygalina and Temkina (2004). They outline the trajectories of feminist organizations in St. Petersburg, but their periodization can be seen to reflect the development of Russian civic organization at large. According to them, the Russian civic sector has undergone four phases. The preliminary period (1985–91) was characterized by the emergence of new actors as a result of the dissolution of the state monopoly over socio-political activities. Iakimets (2002) calls this phase 'optimistic and romantic'. The second period (1991–95) witnessed the emergence of new movements and foreign donor support to civil society activities in Russia. During the third period (1995–99) the civic organization sector became institutionalized. Western support continued to play a key role and the relationships between state, civic organizations and

foreign donors stabilized. The fourth period (2000–2003) – the period that this study addresses – has been characterized by increased co-operation between state and civic organizations, on the one hand, and by increased state control over civic activities, on the other. Western support to Russian civic groups has also declined.

As this periodization implies, the field of civic activity has undergone a series of important developments during the post-Soviet era. The most important ones deal with the institutionalization, localization and professionalization of civic organizations; the emergence and decline of international donor support; and the ambivalent relationship between organizations and citizens. The *institutionalization* of the civic sector has manifested itself first and foremost in the process of 'NGOization',[2] in other words, the informal clubs and loosely defined social movements of the perestroika period evolved into more structured and specialized organizations. Simultaneously with this formalization a decline in mass socio-political mobilization has occurred. The number of organizations has grown, while their membership has decreased. Yanitsky (2000, 111) has argued that the dependency of Russian environmental organizations on foreign donors has caused this non-mobilization and NGOization. As part of the institutionalization process, the legal framework regulating independent civic activity was established during 1995–96. Three laws came into force: the law on civic associations (*Ob obshchestvennykh ob''edineniiakh*),[3] the law on charitable activities and organizations (*O blagotvoritel'noi deiatel'nosti i blagotvoritel'nykh organizatsiiakh*), and the law on non-profit organizations (*O nekommercheskikh organizatsiiakh*).

Civic organizations have become *localized* since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Soviet societal organizations worked on an All-Union basis and were Moscow-centered, but nowadays the main arena for civic activity is the local community (cf. Yanitsky 2000, 6). Some of the Soviet era All-Union organizations continue to exist today, such as the trade union movement, and some of the large civic organizations, such as the human rights organization Memorial, also have subdivisions in Russian regions. Localization can be seen as a result of the regionalization process of the Yeltsin era (1991–99) and as a counter-reaction to the Soviet organizational culture.

Russian civic organizations have also become more professional. *Professionalization* does not, however, apply with equal strength to the whole field of civic organizations and to all Russian regions. It pertains in particular to urban centers and organizations that receive foreign funding, as donor agencies have been keen to turn civic organizations more professional (Richter 2002; Zdravomyslova 2005). Professionalization and its implications for civic activism have been the subjects of lively discussion in the contexts of Western civic organizations. In many Western countries, the 'third sector' is carrying more responsibility for social welfare as a result of the shrinking role of the public sector in service delivery. On the one hand, professionalism has been regarded as desirable in order for organizations to

provide services in a sustained and credible manner, but on the other hand, professionalization has also been seen as problematic, entailing the erosion of amateur ethos and mass mobilization (Eikås and Selle 2003, 112). Professionalization can also result in producing an increasing distance between the leadership and the rank-and-file members, on the one hand, and between organizations and their constituencies, on the other (Turner 2001).

The Russian civic sector has developed in an essentially global context in which *foreign funding* has played a significant role.[4] Civil society projects have been a funding priority in many Western donor agencies. US-based donors have been the largest providers of civil society aid to Russia: in 1995 they provided 85 percent of all civil society assistance to Russia (Henderson 2003, 69). This foreign support has centrally shaped the development of the organization sector in Russia by offering models and ideologies for organizational activities and introducing new conceptions of citizenship and the role of the state. These models have frequently been reworked and adjusted to suit the local conditions (see Hemment 2004a). Donor support to civic organizations, however, took a downturn at the beginning of the 2000s.

A central and in many ways problematic issue is the *relationship between civic organizations and citizens*. Scholars have contended that organizations tend to have weak links with citizens and the people they are supposed to represent (Henderson 2003, 10; Zdravomyslova 2005). As many organizations are dependent on foreign funding, they are seen to gravitate more toward the international than the local community. Organizations have not managed to attract mass support for their activities. Zdravomyslova (ibid.) argues that the reputation of civic organizations is low and that organizations often are not trusted, which is connected with the general distrust of institutions in Russian society. Many perceive civic organizations to be corrupt and those activists who get funding from the West are also frequently envied because of their higher salaries. However, as a rule those who use the services of civic organizations and receive support from them view organizations positively (Zdravomyslova 2005).

Civic activity in Tver′: structures, practices, actors

In this section, I present the results of the survey of registered civic organizations in Tver′ conducted in 2004–5. It offers a general view of the practices, structures and actors of the organizational terrain. The organizations that participated in the survey were divided into ten fields of activity (see Table 2.1).

Twenty-six percent of the surveyed organizations in Tver′ were founded during the Soviet era, while the overwhelming majority of organizations, 74 percent, were founded during 1992–2005. The establishment of civic organizations peaked during 1996–99; 43 percent of the surveyed organizations were founded then. Thus Tver′ is consistent with the 'NGOization thesis', that is, the number of registered organizations notably increased during the

Table 2.1 Primary field of activity of the surveyed civic organizations (n = 103)

Field of activity	Frequency
Culture and education	20
Youth and children	16
Interest group*	13
Social welfare and health care	12
Sport and leisure	11
Human rights, environment, women's issues**	8
Professional groups (incl. labor unions)	8
Political activity (parties)	6
Military, patriotism	3
Other	6

* This category refers to groups that define themselves as defending the interests and
  rights of a certain social group (disables, veterans, etc.).
** Human rights groups 2, women's 3, enviromental 3.

second half of the 1990s (cf. Brygalina and Temkina 2004; Iakimets 2002; Sheregi and Abrosimova 2002, 304). This peak can be explained, at least partly, by the intensive foreign support of Russian civic groups during that period.

The survey mapped civic organizations' resources. Sixty-one percent of the organizations reported having an office of their own. There was a statistically indicative difference between old and new organizations: the overwhelming majority of old organizations had an office of their own, whilst almost half of the new organizations did not.[5] Civic organizations in Tver′ tend to rely on volunteer labor. More than half of the organizations, 57 percent, were unable to pay a salary to anyone, and 87 percent of the organizations could pay salaries to fewer than ten people.[6] A few respondents cited this lack of material gain in organizational work as the reason for female dominance in their organization.[7] A female leader of a social welfare and health care organization commented that: "We can't pay salaries to everybody; a man is more interested in money – he's the breadwinner." Another female leader representing a culture and education group argued in a similar vein: "One doesn't earn much here; men don't want to 'waste' time."

However, although participation does not automatically offer economic capital in the form of a salary, it can offer economic capital in a different form, for example, access to various benefits in kind, such as trips abroad, computers, Internet access, etc. It can also offer access to cultural capital, such as training programmes in languages and computer skills, and help sustain existing cultural capital, for example, by offering a way to pursue one's professional career. This cultural capital acquired in organizations can be converted later into economic capital in the labor market.

The survey also addressed the degree of professionalization in civic organizations. Professional organizations can be conceived of as those having their own office and paid staff. Thirty-three percent of the surveyed organizations were such professional organizations. Thirty percent of the

surveyed organizations had neither their own office nor paid staff and could thus be categorized as amateur organizations.[8] Organizations established during the Soviet era were more often professional than organizations founded during the post-Soviet era. Arguably old organizations have inherited resources, such as premises, from the Soviet era. There were no statistically significant differences between female- and male-dominated groups in terms of professionalism, nor, interestingly enough, between groups receiving foreign aid and those not. This implies that foreign funding does not automatically lead to increased professionalism.

Self-definitions and repertoires of activity

How did the organizations describe and name themselves? These names are of interest because they can convey to us important information about the groups' self-understanding. In the survey questionnaire, the respondents were offered a number of characterizations and asked to choose two that described them best. Most often organizations' primary identification was 'civic organization' (*obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*), 'non-governmental, non-profit organization' (*negosudarstvennaia, nekommercheskaia organizatsiia*) and 'part of civil society' (*chast' grazhdanskogo obshchestva*). The prevalence of the concept of civic organization presumably stems from the fact that it is a familiar concept from the Soviet Union.[9] Civic organization and non-profit organization are also organizational-juridical categories according to which civic activities are defined through legislation, which may also explain why they were often identified with. 'Governmental organization' (*gosudarstvennaia organizatsiia*) and 'civic activists' (*grazhdanskie aktivisty*), by contrast, found the least resonance among the respondents.

Table 2.2 Self-definitions of the surveyed organizations (n = 102)

Self-definitions	Frequency
Civic organization	65
Non-governmental, non-profit organization	32
Part of civil society	26
Part of the third sector	8
Self-help group	7
Partner of the state and business	7
We offer social support to population	6
Governmental and non-governmental organization	6
Circle of friends, colleagues and family members	6
Social movement	6
Civic activists	5
Governmental organization	1
Other*	14

* For example: political party (*politicheskaia partiia*), club (*klub*) and association (*ob''edinenie*).

Civic organization was the most popular identification for both old and new organizations; 77 percent of the old and 57 percent of the new organizations chose this category. Thirty-seven percent of the old and 27 percent of the new organizations chose the term non-governmental, non-profit organization, and 19 percent and 27 percent the term civil society, respectively. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, only a few organizations, all of them new groups, identified themselves with the concept of the third sector, despite the fact that this model has been actively promoted by foreign donors (see Hemment 2004b). It is particularly interesting that none of those groups receiving foreign funding identified themselves with the third sector. Youth and children's and education and culture organizations characterized themselves as third sector, as did, most surprisingly, three political parties. By contrast, none of the social welfare organizations described themselves by the term 'third sector', although these organizations are conventionally considered to be the main agents of the third sector in the West. This clearly indicates that the third sector has a different shade of meaning in Russia than it does in Western societies. It is intriguing that as many as half of the surveyed political parties associated themselves with this term, but unfortunately the survey does not allow us to unravel the meanings they assign to it.

We also asked the respondents to choose the three most important forms of activity of their organization.

Education and moral upbringing were overwhelmingly the most popular forms of activity chosen: altogether 60 percent of the organizations reported it belonging to their repertoire of activity.[10] Education seems to be the

Table 2.3 Most important forms of activity of the surveyed civic organizations (n = 104)

Forms of Activity	Percent
Education, moral upbringing (*vospitanie*)	60
Organization of various kinds of events	43
Contacts and co-operation with the city and regional administration	31
Self-help	26
Provision of social support	14
Nomination of candidates for election	11
Demonstrations, public protests	11
Research	10
Contacts with local and national media	10
Legal consultation	8
Rehabilitation, promotion of health	7
Contacts and co-operation with the city and regional politicians	7
Protection of interests of a social group	5
Petitions	4
Organization of strikes	2
Contacts and co-operation with State Duma politicians	2
Contacts and co-operation with the federal administration	1
Other	19

dominant form of activity in Russian civic organizations, in general. Yanitsky (2000, 120) has observed its centrality in Russian environmental organizations, Sheregi and Abrosimova (2002, 312) in Russian human rights groups and Sperling (1999) in the women's movement. There seems to be a strong belief in education in civic organizations as a meaningful form of organizational action and a way to achieve goals. The popularity of educational activities arguably stems from three factors: the cultural tradition of education and enlightenment of the Russian intelligentsia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; from the Soviet tradition of moral upbringing that played a key role in Soviet societal organizations; and from the fact that foreign donors have actively funded various educational campaigns. In addition to education, Tver′ organizations were also actively involved in organizing various events, co-operation with the city and regional administration and in self-help. The least popular forms of activity mentioned were the creation of contacts and co-operation with the federal administration, the organization of strikes, and the creation of contacts and co-operation with State Duma politicians. This indicates, first, that organizations rarely engage in contentious activities and, second, that they are more inclined to work at the local than at the federal level.

The membership profile of civic organizations

The organizations in Tver′ are polarized in terms of size. On the one hand, the majority of organizations tend to have a meagre number of members. 39 percent of the organizations have fifty or fewer members and 53 percent a hundred or fewer members. However, on the other hand, there are also a considerable number of organizations – 33 percent – that have a relatively large number of members, over 400. In general, however, it seems that small membership is a typical feature of Russian civic organizations (Romanov 2002; Kovalev 2002; Henry 2006, 214).

New organizations that were founded after the collapse of the Soviet Union tend to have fewer members than the organizations that were founded during the Soviet era, and which, by nature, were mass organizations.

The differences between post-Soviet and Soviet organizations in terms of membership are statistically highly significant.[11] The organizations founded during the Soviet era are primarily organizations such as trade unions and

Table 2.4 Number of members according to the year of foundation of the organization (n = 104), %

Number of members	Year of foundation of the organization		Total %
	1919–91	1992–2005	
0–399	33	77	65
400 or more	67	23	35
Total %	100	100	100

veterans' councils with nationally extensive organizational structures, which they have inherited from the Soviet era. The new civic organizations, by contrast, tend to be small and local and have not been able to attract a large membership. This implies that old and new organizations work at least partly according to a different logic.

Recruiting strategies in organizations are of particular interest. They can shed light on the links between formal organizations and informal social networks. Russia has often been described as a 'society of networks' (Lonkila 1999) where personal connections (*sviazi* and *znakomstvo*) and social networks play a particularly significant role (Ledeneva 1998; Watson 1993). We can categorize recruitment strategies into 'public' and 'private' channels (cf. Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olson 1980, 790). Personal and professional contacts represent private channels of recruitment, whilst media, Internet and organization of events represent public channels. The primary recruitment strategies chosen by the surveyed organizations were personal contacts (30%), public events (24%) and professional contacts (13%). Sixteen percent reported not actively trying to find new members. If we count together the primary and secondary strategies of recruitment, the following picture is revealed.

Private face-to-face channels formed the most important strategy of recruitment: altogether 74 percent of the organizations use them in recruiting new members. Friendship, acquaintances and family ties were used most often in recruiting new members. The public channels were somewhat less prominent, although relatively often new members were reported to be recruited by organizing various events. These results are in line with what Lagerspetz and his colleagues (2002, 78–79) found in their survey of the Estonian non-governmental sector. Among the Estonian organizations, new members also were recruited most often either among friends, acquaintances and relatives of existing members, or by means of public meetings. Almost a fifth of the Estonian organizations reported that they did not actively search for new members, which also corresponds to the results from

Table 2.5 The most important recruitment strategies of the surveyed civic organizations (n = 103)

Recruitment strategies	Frequency
Private channels	
Personal contacts (friends, acquaintances, family)	45
Professional contacts (colleagues, workmates, business partners)	29
Public channels	
Public events	43
Information in media	20
Through Internet	1
We do not actively try to find new members	23
Other	17

Tver′ (23%). Earlier research on Russian civic organizations has also noted the centrality of social networks. Sperling (1999), Lipovskaia (1997) and Henderson (2003, 133), among others, have noted that many Russian women's groups are structured around personal ties and informal networks and do not often show much interest in expanding their membership, and Henry (2002) and Yanitsky (2000, 145) have made similar observation about the Russian environmental movement. Henry (2002) has argued that the non-governmental organization (NGO) in Russia is often a non-governmental individual (NGI), because frequently organizations revolve around one person and his/her immediate primary relations. Gal and Kligman (2000, 94) have argued that in many post-socialist countries "some part of what is presently understood as civil society is the practical (…) continuation of 'second society', or informal aid networks". Renz (2006), for her part, has convincingly shown how informal networks and personal connections function as the main recruitment mechanism in Russian institutional politics. This suggests that non-recruitment, on the one hand, and recruitment via private contacts, on the other, is a more general characteristic of the post-communist organization sector.

The small membership in new civic organizations and the prominence of recruiting via private channels indicate that Russian organizations often build on pre-existing social networks. The relatively high figure for non-recruitment in Tver′ and Estonia could be interpreted to imply that the organizations are structured around a core membership and there is no need to expand beyond it and search for larger constituencies. Indeed, one could argue that organizations are an institutionalized form of social networks. There is an incentive to turn one's social network into a registered organization; as Steven Sampson (2002a, 91) has noted, "social networks can't get grants but autonomous associations can". The network strives to help itself through organizational status. The institutionalization of a social network can be understood as an attempt to convert social capital into economic capital as organizational status opens potential access to governmental and foreign funding. Organization status may also facilitate accumulation of cultural capital, for example, by offering access to various training programs.

This link between organizations and networks calls into question the argument made by Marc Morjé Howard (2003) about the negative effect of informal social networks for participation in civic organizations in post-communist societies. *Contra* Howard, I suggest that private networks can facilitate civic participation, and networks and organizations should not be viewed as mutually exclusive entities (see for similar line of critique, Henry 2006; Cook and Vinogradova 2006). The fact that a number of civic organizations tend to build on personal networks and do not often try to reach beyond them suggests that organizations, in part, continue the Soviet societal pattern of 'society of networks'. Informal networks were a central element of everyday practices during the Soviet period and they also function

as feasible recruitment pools (cf. Yanitsky 2000, 137) and provide an exist-
ing 'infrastructure' for contemporary civic organizations.

   The use of social networks in recruitment is not something particularly
Russian, but studies on social movement organizations in Western socie-
ties have also noted their significance (Diani 2004; Snow *et al*. 1980;
McAdam and Paulsen 1993). However, there seem to be differences in the
relative weight of these recruitment networks in Russian and US (and, per-
haps, Western more generally) organizations. It is helpful to make a dis-
tinction between individual and organizational ties (McAdam and Paulsen
1993).[12] Individual ties refer to interpersonal ties; new members are recrui-
ted from the pool of private networks of existing members, such as parents
and friends. Organizational ties, by contrast, refer to recruitment from
organizational settings, i.e., from other civic organizations and groups.[13]
For example, McAdam and Paulsen (ibid.) in their inquiry on recruitment
processes of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project show that
organizational ties had a much stronger effect than individual ties in
mediating entrance into organizational activity. Russian civic groups seem
to be different in this respect: private channels and individual ties play a
central role in the Russian organizational context, whilst the organizational
ties are weak. For example, no organization in the Tver′ survey mentioned
recruiting members from other existing civic organizations and leaders of
civic organizations only rarely reported participating in any other organi-
zation except the one they run (see next section). Moreover, civic organiza-
tions in Tver′ do not co-operate with each other very actively. Thus,
organizational ties arguably tend to have less significance and individual
contacts more importance in Russian civic groups than in US-based
organizations. The prominence of recruitment from private networks in
Russia can also be seen as being connected with trust: an all-Russian survey
of 2003 reported that the overwhelming majority of people trust members of
their immediate family and relatives (83%) and friends (54%) (Petukhov
2005).

Who are the organization leaders?

The profile of organization leaders reveals important information about
who are active participants in civic organizations. According to the survey
results, 52 percent of the leaders are men and 48 percent women (I will
discuss these gender differences in Chapter 3). The leaders are well edu-
cated: 89 percent of them have higher education.[14] This demonstrates that
the educated class in Russia has been able to make use of its cultural capital
in entering the civic sphere.[15] The same was true also for perestroika-period
organizations. Educated professionals and intellectuals participated
exceptionally actively and were also frequently in leadership positions (Ala-
puro 1993; White 1999; Yanitsky 2000). Thus, we can say that civic
organizations tend to be a form of activity of the educated classes with

which they promote their interests, help themselves, and seek social and individual change. Some members of the intelligentsia have been able to find in civic activity a way to obtain and maintain professional qualifications and acquire a livelihood in new circumstances. This illustrates how the formation of civic activity is intimately connected to the making of a new class structure. The changes in the relative weight and convertibility of different types of capital has opened and excluded different strategies of socio-political participation for different social groups. Perhaps the educated class in current civic organizations also performs the task it was assigned in both Imperial and Soviet Russia: the intelligentsia was understood as the 'great educator' of the masses (Stranius 2002) and education, as was shown, is the most important form of activity in civic organizations.

The link between civic activity and education also manifests itself in the fact that a variety of civic activities take place under the auspices of universities and other educational institutions.[16] In this respect civic activity today continues the pattern familiar from the perestroika era when universities and research institutes functioned as nests of subversive activity maintaining numerous discussion circles and debating clubs (see Alapuro 1993, 203–4; Urban *et al.* 1997, 32–33; Hosking 1992, 12–13). These academic institutions can be seen as 'engendering milieus' (Yanitsky 2000, 250) which offer a solid institutional base for various organizational activities.

Critical remarks about the forms and development of civil society in post-socialist societies have been made in a number of studies. Don Kalb (2002, 318–19) has argued that the development of civil society has "brought great advantages for the well educated and existing elites" and created "a close alliance of local elites and transnational actors". As a consequence of Western support of civil society, there has emerged an 'NGO elite' that is separated from the rest of society and from its constituencies.

It is true that civic activity has produced new social hierarchies and inequalities, and partly also reproduced the old, by offering to the educated classes a chance to achieve social mobility, power and resources (cf. Hemment 2004b; Sampson 1996). However, I suggest that we need to define more precisely what actually constitutes this 'NGO elite'. We can undoubtedly identify a group of NGO professionals that can be called an elite, but it can hardly include leaders of a provincial children's travel club or veterans' clubs. Judging from my experience, it is very difficult to call any of those activists I worked with in Tver′ as NGO elites. The members of the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies, by far the most successful organization in Tver′ in terms of donor funding, cannot be labeled as an NGO elite. The leader of the organization, for example, lives in a state-owned apartment that has been for years in need of major renovation and that does not have a bathroom or access to hot water.

Table 2.6 Leader's age (n = 105)

Leader's age	Frequency	Women	Men
–20	1	0	1
21–30	6	1	5
31–40	18	7	11
41–50	39	14	25
51–60	27	18	9
Over 60	14	10	4
Total	105	50	55

My point is not to deny the fact that Western aid and the professionalization of civic activity have created new social divisions and injustices. In fact, it would be extremely surprising if they *had not*. The civic sphere is interlinked with other fields of society (state, markets and family) and affected by them, and hence there is no reason to assume that the sphere of civic activity would be somehow 'pure' or 'innocent'. I suggest we need more empirical research about the NGO elite and divisions in the very heterogeneous civic sector, for instance, about *where* this elite is geographically located and in which *fields* of civic activity.

The majority of the organization leaders in Tver′, 63 percent, were 41–60 years old, representing the Soviet generation. Only 7 percent of the leaders were under thirty, and all but one of them were men. Women, by contrast, dominated in the elder age groups.

This age pattern mirrors interestingly the results from an all-Russian survey of 2003, according to which belief in and willingness to engage in collective action to achieve goals systematically grew from younger to older generations. In fact, it was precisely those of 41 years old or older who believed the most in collective action, i.e., the same age group that predominates in the leadership in Tver′ organizations. By contrast, in the age group 18–40 self-reliance was perceived more desirable than collective action (Petukhov 2005).

There were no statistically significant differences between female and male leaders in their participation in political parties and other civic organizations. Only 20 percent of the leaders had a party card (9 women and 12 men). Seventy-two percent of the respondents did not participate in any other civic organization besides the one that they ran. Thus, the leaders' civic participation tends to be exclusive, that is, only a few have multiple organizational memberships. We also asked the leaders to describe their activism in the Soviet Union. Ten percent reported having had a post in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and 28 percent as having been members of the CPSU. Only 11 percent of the organization leaders reported they had not participated in any socio-political organizations in the Soviet era. This is hardly surprising, since the majority of the leaders represent the Soviet generation.

Table 2.7 The surveyed organization leaders' participation in Soviet societal organizations (n = 105)

Soviet societal organizations	Percent
Rank-and-file member in Komsomol	45
Rank-and-file member in the CPSU	37
Active participant in labour union activities	26
Post in Komsomol	21
Post in the CPSU	10
Participant in informal activities of the perestroika era	7
Participant in dissident activities	3
Participant in the activities of the Orthodox church or other religious organizations	3
Other societal organizations*	19

*These included, among others, the Red Cross, *Znanie*, *Druzhina okhrany prirody*, Women's councils, and *Dobrovol'nye narodnye druzhiny*.

Funding sources and co-operation

Lack of funding is a major obstacle for Russian civic organizations.[17] In the survey, the organization leaders were asked to state the two most important sources of funding for their organization. The primary sources most often mentioned were: membership dues (28%), sponsorship from a private enterprise (18%) and support from the regional government (13%). The sources least often mentioned were Russian foundations (1%), city administration (4%) and commercial activity conducted by the organization (5%). If we count together all funding (city, regional and federal), it exceeds the funding from private enterprises, being 22 percent and the second most important source of funding. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, only 8 percent of the surveyed organizations mentioned foreign donors as their primary source of funding. When the primary and secondary sources of funding are added, the following picture is revealed.

Table 2.8 The surveyed organizations' most important sources of funding (n = 105)

Source of Funding	Percent
Membership dues	34
Private enterprise sponsorship	31
Regional administration	23
City administration	11
Foreign foundation	10
Commercial activity	10
Federal administration	8
Russian foundation	2
Other*	20
No income	17

*This category includes, for example, donations and admission and service fees.

   Membership dues and enterprise sponsorship remain the most important sources of funding.[18] However, the state is the largest financier if we count together the three different levels of government support; the figure rises to 42 percent, which is quite a substantial proportion. Only 10 percent reported receiving funding from foreign donors. This may be a signal of the decline of foreign support to civic organizations in Russia and perhaps, in particular, to provincial organizations. The substantial amount of government support may also be due partly to the decline in international funding; perhaps organizations have begun to turn more than before to the authorities in search of funding for their activities. There also seem to be differences between organizational fields in their ability to receive funding from the state. For example, non-governmental crisis centers in Russia function almost exclusively on foreign donor funding (Liapounova and Drachova 2004, 63). This suggests that the state is not particularly eager to support organizations that seek to transform gendered power structures.

   The organization leaders were asked to mention the three most important partners for their organization, in order to find out whether organizations tend to create more horizontal ties among themselves, or whether they gravitate toward the state or the international community.

   The main horizon of activity for civic groups is the local community; collaboration takes place primarily at the local level. The city and regional executive powers were the most important partners. The third most important partner was civic organizations. Only one group reported collaborating with labor unions. This could be explained by the fact that trade unions have tended to cultivate primarily vertical relationships with the state instead of horizontal relationships with other civic organizations (see Chapter 7). It is notable that only few organizations collaborated with legislatures and political parties. Fewer than 10 percent reported collaborating

Table 2.9 The most important partners of the surveyed civic organizations (n = 105)

Partner	Percent
Regional administration	51
City administration	47
Civic organization(s)	35
Private business	15
City legislature	11
Orthodox church	11
Foreign partner	10
Political party	9
Federal state administration	8
Regional legislature	8
State Duma	4
Labor union	1
Criminal groups	0
Other partner	18
No partners	8

with international partners. This indicates that the organizations in Tver′ do not orient themselves toward the international community. The fact that governmental structures were reported as the most important source of funding and co-operation partner of civic organizations indicates that organizations are primarily oriented toward the authorities. Thus, civic organizations tend to be keener to cultivate vertical ties – relationships with governmental bodies – than to create horizontal connections to each other. This gravitation toward the authorities was further underlined when we analyzed with whom the surveyed civic groups would like to collaborate more. They reported to be most eager to develop further co-operation with the regional administration (50%), the city administration (33%), and with the regional legislature (14%). Eleven percent of the organizations expressed a wish to collaborate more with other civic groups and with international partners. None of the organizations wished to collaborate more with trade unions, and only 1 percent wished to increase collaboration with political parties.

The collaboration patterns in Tver′ could reflect a larger phenomenon in post-socialist countries, as Regulska (1999, 64) has also observed that local governments are the primary co-operation partners with Polish civic organizations. Regulska's (ibid.) study also shows that, like Tver′ civic groups, Polish organizations are reluctant to collaborate with political parties. Lack of collaboration between parties and civic organizations can, on the one hand, signal problematic relations between the two, but, on the other hand, it can also be interpreted as reflecting willingness of civic organizations to maintain their autonomy and to avoid overt ideological influence on their activities (cf. ibid., 64).

This strong willingness to collaborate with the regional administration can be partly explained by the fact that at the time of the survey, a new governor for Tver′ region had just been elected. Perhaps the organizations' interest in collaboration signals the high hopes held for this new administration. Willingness to co-operate with the city administration was also strong, but less so than willingness to co-operate with the region. The city administration was a very active supporter of civic organizations during the term of the former mayor, but with the election of a new mayor in 2003 the situation changed. A number of surveyed organizations complained that the new mayor's administration viewed organizations negatively, whilst the previous mayor and his administration had encouraged contacts.

The leaders were queried in the survey in more detail about their organization's patterns of co-operation with the authorities. Eighty-three percent reported collaborating with the city administration and 81 percent with the regional administration. By contrast, organizations had only a few ties with federal executive power. Civic organizations had fewer ties and co-operated less with legislative than with executive power at all territorial levels (see Table 2.10). However, the common denominator for co-operation with executive and legislative powers is the weakening of ties from the local to the federal level. The fact that organizations co-operate more with executive

Table 2.10 The surveyed organizations' co-operation with executive and legislative powers, %

	Amount of co-operation	City	Region	Federation
Executive Power(n = 105)	No co-operation	17	19	65
	Little co-operation	27	25	14
	Somewhat co-operation	30	17	13
	Much co-operation	26	39	7
	Total %	100	100	100
Legislative Power(n = 104)	No co-operation	38	46	58
	Little co-operation	23	20	23
	Somewhat co-operation	25	25	15
	Much co-operation	14	9	4
	Total %	100	100	100

than legislative power can be explained, first, by the fact that the Russian state system is dominated by executive power (Urban *et al.* 1997). Second, the executive branch has more resources to distribute to civic organizations than the legislative branch, which contributes to the gravitation of organizations toward it. Third, weaker ties of co-operation with the legislative branch may also stem from the suspicion that organizations tend to feel toward politics. Opinion polls show that the absolute majority of Russians have practically no trust in political parties (Shlapentokh 2006). A number of surveyed organization leaders in Tver′ thought that politicians only wanted to use civic groups to further their own political agendas, especially during election campaigns.

The leaders were also asked to assess the attitudes of executive and legislative powers toward their organization. The majority of them assessed attitudes of the city and regional powers to be positive or neutral. Fewer than 10 percent of the leaders considered legislative and executive powers to regard their group negatively. Over one-third of them reported not knowing how the federal powers view their group, signaling a lack of contacts with the federal authorities. In general, the leaders assessed the attitudes of executive power as more positive than those of legislative power.

The meanings of politics and civic activity

How do civic activists signify political (*politicheskii*) and civic (*obshchestvennyi*) activities?[19] Do they define the activities of their organization as political? I focus here on presenting the results from the survey, but these same articulations were also repeated in the thematic interviews with civic activists.

Sixty-six percent of the surveyed respondents defined their organization as non-political and 28 percent as political.[20] Human rights, women's, and environmental groups as well as political parties relatively most often defined their activities as political. By contrast, groups representing social welfare and health care, sport and leisure, and professional organizations

defined their activity most often as non-political. There were no statistically significant differences between female- and male-dominated organizations in identifying organizations as political, but an indicative difference could be found between new and old organizations. The old organizations tended to define their activities as non-political more often than the new organizations.[21] Presumably their position as party auxiliaries in the Soviet era has made them disassociate themselves more strongly from politics, at least at the rhetorical level.

Those respondents who defined their organization as *political* most often explained it by saying that the questions and issues their organization deals with are linked with politics:

> Our activities are political: environmental issues cannot be dealt with outside the political context. They have to be considered in combination with social, economic, political, ideological issues. Otherwise, we get what we have now. (Environment)[22]
>
> The activities of our organization are political, because we help to solve global questions concerning protection of families. (Social welfare and health care)

Second, the political nature was also explained by referring to the fact that the organization seeks to transform people's worldviews. A leader of a youth organization, for example, commented that "the activities of our organization are political, because we influence youth, set life priorities". A leader of an education and culture organization explained their activities to be political, because "our organization has an opportunity to shape people's consciousness, which authorities have to take into account".

Third, organizations were defined as political, because they patch up the state's failure and correct its shortcomings. As one leader of an interest group pointed out,

> The activities of our organization are political: it happens too often that short-sighted politicians and the unscrupulous military put the lives of our people at stake, and for them the death of our children entails no punishment from the state. That's why we interfere.

A number of leaders also referred to the constitution of the organization and to the fact that the organization is a political party as explanations for their political identity.

Those leaders who defined their organizational activity as *non-political* drew on three explanatory frameworks. First, the overwhelming majority pointed out that their organization has different missions, tasks and interests from political parties. The respondents repeatedly drew a distinction between political (*politicheskaia*) and civic/societal (*obshchestvennaia*) or social (*sotsial'naia*); they referred to their identity as a civic or social

organization as opposed to a politically active one. They defined organizations and political parties as operating according to a different logic: civic organizations serve society, the people and a 'common good', while politics are associated with parties and the aspiration to and struggle for power.

> Our activities are not political, we have other interests: social ones. (Women's group)
> The activities of our organization are not political, because we do not try to attain power; we are ready to work with those who are in power. (Culture and education)
> The activities of our organization are not at all political, we have nothing to do with them: (a) we have no wish to participate; (b) (…) the sole aim of our activities is improving the social situation in the region. (other)
> We are a civic organization (*obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*). (Interest group)

Non-political nature was also explained to be based on the constitution of the organization, and to stem from the fact that organizational activities are not linked with political parties. For example, one trade union leader commented that "a trade union is not a political party", and a leader of a social welfare and health care organization argued as follows:

> We pursue no political goals, goals of winning power – parties come and go. A party is a tool for dealing with one's problems, we're not ambitious, we address practical problems. We have no political system as such, no political ideology. Our task is helping disabled people, not party members, our activities are anti-party in nature.

The distinction drawn between political and civic in the survey is not, however, clear-cut or definitive, but a number of organization leaders voiced ambivalence. They defined their activities as both political and non-political and explained it as follows:

> Our organizational activities are not political. This is purely cultural and educational [organization], although in the end education of a cultured person (*vospitanie cheloveka kul'turnogo*) is also politics. (Culture and education)
> Both yes and no. Our politics is not momentary, it's long-term. The ideas we bring to (…) the human community are attractive and people want to follow them, this is influence on people's minds – the so-called politics. (Culture and education)
> Activities of our organization are political in a way. Protection of religious people's rights often falls into the sphere of political decisions. (Interest group)

These explanations destabilize the division between civic/social and political. The leaders explained that although the organization is not engaged in politics *per se*, its activities frequently touch and get entangled with politics. Some respondents also pointed to the blurred line between civic and political activities by saying that some civic groups engage in politics (e.g., nominate candidates in elections) and that some organizations, albeit organized at the grassroots level, are controlled by the authorities.

The following table (2.11) summarizes the meanings attached to political parties and civic organizations in the survey and thematic interviews.

Table 2.11 Meanings of civic organizations and political parties

	Political Parties	*Civic organizations*
Sphere of activity	National level; Moscow	Local level, grassroots
	Power (*vlast'*), state	Outside politics, oriented to societal and everyday life
	Political organizations	Social and civic organizations
Goals and tasks	Aim at achieving power; political struggle and leverage	Solve concrete problems of social groups; offer real help to society and people
	Defend interests of the state	Defend interests of the people
	Pursue selfish personal interests, interests of the elite and ambitions of party leaders	Societal interests, 'common good'
	Slogans, no deeds; chatter	Do real, concrete deeds
	'Dirty tricks', elections and legislative work	Charity, social support, volunteer work, education
Characteristics	Large economic resources	Little money and resources
	Hierarchy, discipline, bureaucracy	Freedom, no hierarchy
	Lack of accountability	Keep what they promise
	Distrust, dishonesty	Justice, humanism, spirituality
	Political ambitions, dirty business	Friendship
	Short-lived	Independent of political parties
	Exploit civic organizations for their own benefit	Initiatory
	Ideology, theses, program; party principles, rules, presidiums	Collectives, communality
	Active only during elections; do not work with the electorate	Lack of decision-making power
	Real power, more substantial (than civic organizations)	Founded by people themselves; close to people
	Created by authorities, operate top-down; detached from the people	Democracy, openness

These results reflect those reported in an all-Russian survey in 2003. The majority of respondents classified politics as "a means of earning money" (46%), "primarily an opportunity to influence others and enjoy power" (39%) and as "dirty business in which decent people should not take part" (23%).

Conclusion

This chapter has traced central trajectories of civic organization from Soviet to post-Soviet Russia and offered an overview of the characteristics of civic organizations in Tver′. On the basis of the analysis, we can identify five central logics of civic activity that characterize not only Tver′, but the contemporary Russian civic sector in general.

First, the organizational sector has been polarized in terms of membership size. On the one hand, new organizations founded after 1991 tend to have a meager number of members, whilst organizations founded in the Soviet era – mass organizations *par excellence* – tend to have notably larger memberships. Second, organizations are predominantly engaged in non-contentious activities, oriented toward education and co-operation with the authorities and civic groups, and only seldom practice contentious tactics in the form of strikes and demonstrations.

Third, cultural capital has a central role in civic organizations. Not only are organizations primarily involved in education and moral upbringing, but the educated class also tends to dominate the field of civic activism. Educational institutions have proven to be milieus conducive to civic activities, as a number of groups have been established and function in connection with such institutions. However, this centrality of cultural capital can be also problematic. It may entail that social groups with little cultural capital are marginalized from civic activities, which impedes their ability to exercise political citizenship.

Fourth, institutionalization of social networks forms a central logic in civic activity. The most popular channels through which to recruit new members to organizations are private ones and they also seem to play a more central role in Russian civic organizations than, for example, in US organizations, owing to the weak role of organizational ties in Russia. Small levels of membership in organizations founded in the post-Soviet era and the prominence of recruitment through private channels suggest that the post-Soviet organizational sector builds upon pre-existing social networks. Founding an organization can be seen as a form of self-help, as organizational status facilitates the conversion of social capital into economic capital by opening up potential access to governmental and foreign funding. However, although civic organizations do not necessarily always offer economic capital to participants in the form of salaries, they can provide the opportunity to maintain and accumulate cultural capital, for example, by offering access to training programs, which later on can be converted into economic capital in the labor market.

Finally, civic groups tend to be local and gravitate toward executive power. The main orientation of civic groups is the local community and the groups collaborate more with the executive than with the legislative branch. Organizations have only few ties with federal executive and legislative structures. The same has been noted in a number of earlier studies in other Russian regions (Iakimets 2002; Sevortyan and Barchukova 2002; Henderson 2003, 57), which suggests that this is a dominant pattern of co-operation. The analysis of the funding and co-operation practices of civic groups in Tver′ also reveals a strong gravitation toward the authorities. The state as a whole is the single most important financier of civic groups and municipal and regional executive powers are their most important partners. The organizations are also very keen to co-operate more with governmental structures. This indicates that organizations tend to cultivate vertical more than horizontal ties.

These close relationships between civic organizations and the authorities may be interpreted in two ways. First, they can be seen as a sign of partnership between the authorities and organizations, or second, they can signal that organizations have become more dependent on the state and consequently that their ability to act autonomously and to criticize the authorities may be hampered. My interpretation is that it is a case of the latter. This strong orientation to co-operation may encompass a potential co-option effect: organizations begin to lose their status as civic groups and increasingly turn into state auxiliaries. As funding from foreign donors has been in decline, it seems that the organizations have turned more than before to the authorities in search of resources.

Civic organizations' relationships with politics are ambivalent. Only a few organizations collaborate with political parties and a widespread distrust of politics was expressed in the survey and thematic interviews in Tver′. The majority of civic groups do not identify their activities as political, and the activists often draw a distinction between political parties as struggling for political power and leverage, on the one hand, and civic organizations as pursuing a 'common good' and being oriented toward society and citizens, on the other hand. Civic organizations' lack of co-operation with and trust in formal political institutions can be seen as problematic, because it hinders their capacity to channel citizens' demands to the decision-making bodies, and ultimately may circumscribe the exercise of political citizenship.

3 Gender in socio-political activity

Power, participation and agency

In this chapter, I continue mapping the characteristics of Russian socio-political activity. I will examine how civic organizations and formal politics are gendered: how women and men practice political citizenship and how they are positioned and represented as political subjects. Gendering of agency is examined at two interrelated analytical levels. First, gender is analyzed at a symbolic level. I ask how femininity and masculinity and their interrelationships are represented in the context of civic activity and politics, and how sexual difference is constructed as a political difference (cf. Rosenholm 1999, 14). How do the categories 'woman' and 'man' emerge within different interpretative repertoires and how are the relations of subordination/emancipation constructed through them? I will also discuss how repertoires of gender and activism intersect with discourses on nationality ('Russianness', 'Sovietness', 'us' as a nation). I argue that with the signification of socio-political activity and the symbolic demarcation of its boundaries, a national gender order and political community are produced.

Second, this chapter addresses the question of gendered practices of participation. Are there differences in women's and men's participation in civic organizations and formal politics? Do women participate more in civic groups, or is there rather a gender division so that women dominate certain types of organizations and men other types? Several scholars have contended that women are very active in the civic sector in Russia (e.g. Richter 2002; Henderson 2003; Sperling 2006). However, this claim has not been thus far statistically attested. I address this question here by investigating with the representative survey how women and men actually participate in civic groups in Tver′. These results provide an indication of the gendered patterns of the Russian civic terrain and can be used as a point of comparison for future studies in other Russian localities.

This chapter begins with a short introduction to the Soviet gender system, which forms an important background for understanding the gendering practices of post-Soviet society. In the second section I examine the meanings activists attach to civic organizations and formal politics in the thematic interviews and discuss the interpretative repertoires emerging in

them. The third section focuses upon examining articulations of gender relations in the survey. After this I discuss why activists employ precisely these interpretative repertoires and the functions these repertoires have. The final section studies gendered participation strategies in socio-political activities.

The Soviet gender system and its post-Soviet contestation

The basic principles of the Soviet gender system were shaped in the 1930s. Although the different governmental policies for transforming and consolidating gender relations and the public debate on gender relations had different emphases in different historical periods, the main principles of the Soviet gender system remained fairly immutable until the 1980s (Liljeström 1993; 1995). The Soviet gender system was officially based upon an egalitarian principle. The state supposedly granted equal rights for men and women in all spheres of life. In the Soviet system, gender relations were articulated in the discourses of 'equality' (*ravnopravie*) and 'the woman question' (*zhenskii vopros*), which marginalized gendered power structures as a special, separate issue and signified women as an object of 'liberation', as a 'question' to be answered by male subjects (Rosenholm 1999, 7–9). These discourses were the only legitimate way to talk about gender in the public domain. The Soviet gender system was based on a principle of simultaneous emphasis on 'equality' – avoiding sexual difference by interpreting men and women as 'similar', without questioning male dominance – and 'difference' – biological determinism as a framework for explaining gender differences in all spheres of life (Liljeström 1995; Temkina and Rotkirch 1997). The official discourse denied gender hierarchy and asymmetries and declared that women and men had the same rights, while it simultaneously portrayed women and men as inherently different because of their biological/physiological composition.

Women's and men's positions in Soviet society were determined by the needs of the state and socialist ideology. Feminine identity was constructed upon motherhood and paid work. Motherhood was glorified and the domestic realm was defined as a 'natural' sphere for women. The backbone of masculine identity, by contrast, was paid work, but a man's role in the domestic realm was culturally weak and parenthood was in practice identified with motherhood. The Soviet state symbolically and materially appropriated the traditional male role in the private domain (Ashwin 2000). This meant the disruption of the traditional private patriarchal structures and marked a shift from the private patriarchy – women's dependency on individual men (spouses, fathers) – toward public patriarchy, in which women and men were subject to paternalist state power.[1] A central element of the public patriarchy was the alliance the state forged with women by defining motherhood as every woman's civic duty toward the state (ibid., 11; Issoupova 2000). The ideal Soviet woman was to give birth

to and nurse children and was represented as strong and capable of hard work and self-sacrifice (Zdravomyslova 2004, 34; Borodina and Borodin 2000). The ideal Soviet man was represented as providing leadership in the public sphere, as the unyielding, hard-working and committed builder of communism.

This gender system also materialized in Soviet political life. The political system was symbolically associated with masculinity and the political elite was strongly male-dominated. Women never reached the higher echelons of political power, although there was a quota of 33 percent for women in the Supreme Soviet. Women also joined the CPSU less often than men (Buckley 1989). As the party card was a prerequisite for a successful career and prestigious positions in society, it is reasonable to argue that women's low party membership rate contributed to their marginalization in the official public sphere. There was a clear pattern in Soviet political participation familiar also from other societies: women participated more actively at the local level in socio-political life, but their participation decreased strongly toward the higher echelons of power (ibid.).

The Soviet state thus created a distinctly gendered conception of citizenship in which women and men, although officially equal, were in practice defined by different citizen identities, rights and obligations. Men's citizenship was defined as being practiced in the official state realm, in paid work, politics and the military. Women's citizenship, by contrast, was realized in both public and private domains in their roles as mothers and waged workers. Both men and women had access and a duty to participate in the public domain, but only women had a culturally legitimate position – and a caring duty – in the domestic sphere. Women and men did not participate in the public sphere on an equal footing, but had hierarchically structured and gender-specific positions and tasks in it.

The Soviet gender system came under public debate and contestation at the end of the 1980s. The institutional and ideological underpinnings of the Soviet gender system was transformed (Ashwin 2000, 18) and consequently gender relations and ideals were reworked in a number of arenas. The post-Soviet gender system is a blend of breaks and continuities. As in the Soviet Union, in contemporary Russia the majority of women continue to be engaged in fulltime paid work and womanhood is strongly defined culturally in the framework of motherhood. The monetarization of everyday and family life in post-Soviet Russia, that is, money and livelihood operating as central structuring principles of everyday life, has strongly cultivated the ideal of a male breadwinner (Rotkirch 2000, 244–51; see also Ashwin 2006b, 35).[2] Liberalization of public discourses has made public openly sexist rhetoric and calls for gender traditionalism with a search for 'proper gender roles', but also feminist interpretations of gender relations that question Soviet biological determinism and gendered power structures in society. In what follows, I examine how gender relations are being renegotiated in the context of civic and political participation.

Interpretative repertoires

I have identified in the survey and thematic interviews four interpretative repertoires that articulate gender relations in the context of socio-political activity in different ways.[3] The first repertoire genders socio-political participation by drawing on the notion of *character*. Men and women are construed as essentially different, which entails that they hold different qualities, capacities, orientations and interests, and consequently are positioned differently in society. Second, gender relations are articulated with the metaphor of *space*. This repertoire constructs a gendered division of labor and agency based on gender-specific domains. It often intersects with the character repertoire, that is, gendered spaces are interpreted to stem from gender-specific qualities. The third repertoire articulates gender and civic activity by drawing on *socio-structural explanations*. Women and men are perceived to be involved differently in socio-political life because of various socio-cultural practices and structural factors. In this repertoire we can also find a feminist sub-category that explicitly problematizes and challenges the prevailing gender system and articulates gendered power and hierarchy. The survey also includes a repertoire of *gender neutrality*, which portrays gender as not playing a role in organizational activities. Gender neutrality also comes up on a few occasions in the thematic interviews, but it is notably more widespread in the survey.[4] All these repertoires are employed both by male and female activists and some of the activists draw on more than one repertoire.

The spatial and character repertoires build upon essentialist understanding of sexual difference, while the socio-structural repertoire draws on a non-essentialist framework.[5] When reading the interviews at the beginning this research, I was frequently puzzled and irritated with the essentialist speech. Previous research of Soviet/Russian gender relations had documented the cultural strength of biological determinism (Liljeström 1993, 1995; Kay 2000; Ashwin 2000), which presumably made me more readily to recognize this speech. However, it simultaneously prevented me from 'hearing' the confusion and ambiguity in the essentialist interpretations. As my analysis proceeded, I gradually began to unpack essentialism by analyzing its different shades and how it was destabilized. I also began to contemplate the functions of essentialism in the data. The analysis in this chapter will show that the boundary between essentialism and non-essentialism is not unambiguous. I distinguish between biologically grounded and culturally/psychologically grounded essentialism in order to make visible the varying degrees and modes of essentialist thinking. In my view, essentialism can be conceptualized best as a continuum, ranging from biologically grounded essentialism to non-essentialist or constructionist understandings of sexual difference.

In the thematic interviews, the great majority of the activists associated civic activity with femininity. Only three interviewees perceived men as more

active in civic groups, and four pointed out that both women and men are active, but in different ways. By contrast, institutional politics was associated with masculinity. These associations were primarily descriptive, not normative: the interviewees described things as they are, not as how they should be.

The character repertoire: gendered qualities and orientations

In the character repertoire women's greater participation in civic organizations is explained as stemming from sexual difference that assigns women and men different qualities and orientations:

PAVEL DENISOVICH: Women are probably more active [in civic organizations]. (…)

SUVI: Why do you think women are more active?

PAVEL DENISOVICH: (pause) I don't know. It probably all comes from biology.

SUVI: But what do men do if they are not involved in civic organizations?

PAVEL DENISOVICH: Men also try to push their way in, but the incentives are different. They want to be bosses. Very many of them. Aspirations for power. Not to improve life on the planet, but to govern. (Center for Women's History and Gender Studies, CGS)

RAISA BORISOVNA: Women, as I understand it, are more collective-minded. (…) They are more inclined to work [in a collective] than men. Men are more individualistic. They need this "I want to be the best of the best (*samyi-samyi*)". We don't need that. We want everything to be all right, we want things go better. (…) to save one's family, to overcome misfortune – women initially seem to strive for this in a very strong way. A woman, above all, is more sensitive to others' problems. (…) A woman is probably a more social being than a man. [Women] need to socialize (*obshchat'sia*) a great deal. (CGS)

Occasionally, as in Pavel Denisovich's quote, gender differences in participation strategies are directly linked to biology. More often, however, women's and men's participation strategies are not explicitly reduced to biology, but the link between sexual difference and qualities is subtler, as in Raisa Borisovna's quote. She seems to suggest that women, because of their character, do not 'descend' to pursue their own interests in the same way as men. This type of culturally/psychologically grounded essentialism assumes a sexed foundation upon which feminine and masculine qualities are grounded and which directs the channels of and motivation for participation.

   In this repertoire women are attributed qualities such as perseverance, altruism, moral superiority and strength in comparison to men, collective-mindedness, a sense of responsibility, and interest in the 'common good'. A number of these meanings were also attached to civic organizations in the

survey, as Chapter 2 showed, thus illustrating the alignment of women with civic activism. Interestingly, civic activity – and femininity – acquires here, in part, those same meanings that characterized the official Soviet morality and citizen virtues. Men, by contrast are described as self-seeking, individualistic, interested in material wealth, prestige and power. Thus, men are ascribed many of those meanings that were attached to politics in Chapter 2. However, this binary constellation of 'civic activity for the common good' versus 'politics with self-seeking interests' is also disrupted on a couple of occasions. For example, one of the CGS activists pointed out that people occasionally establish civic organizations in order to further their careers and gain social status. Civic organizations thus were attached meanings – such as self-seeking interests – that usually characterize political parties.

Members of the Veterans' Council commented in their interview that women tend to be more actively involved in veteran work than men. They perceived that women are good in organizing this type of work and feel greater need for it.

PAVEL STEPANOVICH: Because women find more satisfaction in this [veterans' organizational] work, if I may put it this way. We believe that they organize this work in a right way, they make it more available and accessible. (…) work in schools, work with children. (…)

TIMUR SERGEEVICH: Women's interest in the work is keener than men's. (…)

KATIA: What about not only in your organization, but in [civic] organizations in society in general [are women or men more active]?

TIMUR SERGEEVICH: In general? Given the age, women, of course. They are more guided by principle, they are more acute in raising issues. (…) our men, they try to be like bears – as quiet as possible, as restrained as possible. Women are more emotional, they are more sensitive to all these things. It is worth saying that women do have a priority.

PAVEL STEPANOVICH: It all depends (*vse otnositel'no*).

TIMUR SERGEEVICH: It all depends, of course. (Veterans' Council)

At the end of the quote, the interviewees also draw on the socio-structural repertoire as they explain women's greater activism with the age structure. They also disrupt the essentialist assumption of gender-specific qualities by pointing out that "it all depends".

A few interviewees also articulated civic activity through *motherhood*: women were portrayed as mobilizing particularly actively because they are mothers. They are understood to hold such social and ethical qualities that give them a capacity to care in both the private and public spheres.

SUVI: What do you think, who is more active in societal life (*v obshchestvennoi zhizni*) – women or men? (…)

IULIIA ANDREEVNA: Women, mostly women.

SUVI: Why?

IULIIA ANDREEVNA: Just because they are mothers. Right now civic organizations are mainly (…) focusing on the organization of leisure time for children, their moral health and physical development. All these fine arts and crafts classes and so on and so forth, which [are aimed to] care about the child's development. "Mothers against drugs" … (Student human rights organization)

This association of motherhood with civic activity is a larger cultural phenomenon in Russia. Motherhood has provided women with a legitimate political identity that can be harnessed to collective action. This is manifested, in particular, in the social movement "Committee of Soldiers' Mothers" (see Zdravomyslova 2004; Caiazza 2002; Oushakine 2006).[6] Motherhood as a model of women's citizenship finds resonance in the wider public, because of the central value assigned to it in Russian culture. Mothers are perceived as having a legitimate position to act in the public sphere for the sake of their children. The resonance of women's mobilization as mothers becomes particularly evident in comparison to feminist groups, which have remained rather small and unknown among the general public in Russia.

In the quotes above, both men and women are portrayed as active, but in different ways. There is, however, a sub-category in this repertoire that produces women's active positions in civic organizations and in life, in general, by contrasting them to passive men in crisis.

SVETLANA DENISOVNA: Mostly women [are more active in civic life]. Actually, women are more active in all spheres. (…) our women in Russia in general, they are like "jacks of all trades" (*na vse ruki ot skuki*) as people say.[7] (*all laughing*) The same is true in the family.

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: She can stop a galloping horse (*Konia na skaku ostanovit*).

BOTH TOGETHER: And will enter a peasant hut on fire (*v goriashchuiu izbu voidet*).[8]

SVETLANA DENISOVNA: Our women are generally very active. (…) our men are more passive.

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: Just criticize everything and watch TV. (…) women are still more active *en masse*. (…) it happened [in Russia] that women perceive themselves as guardians of everything – both in the family and at work. They have taken on the leadership probably because men are passive, because men here are inert. In theory, they are willing to do anything. In reality, the woman is the one in charge of everything. I don't think it's a traditional way, rather – the result of recent history. (Trade Union of Health Care Workers, TUHW)

The representation of men as passive and inert echoes the Soviet discourses of 'crisis of masculinity' and 'demasculinization', that is, the presumed

inability of Russian men to be active agents in their lives, which was inter-
preted as having been caused by the cultural ideal of the strong Soviet
woman (Zdravomyslova and Temkina 2002). In the quote above, the crisis is
interpreted as having been caused above all by the social transformation.
Whereas at the beginning of the 1990s the crisis of the Russian nation was
narrated, in particular, through women (see Pilkington 1992), the crisis of
masculinity has emerged strongly in the discussion from the mid-1990s
onwards (Rotkirch 2000; Riabov 2001, 127–29). Women are perceived as
keeping everything together while men are preoccupied with their quests for
identity. However, women often seem to take on this active stance somewhat
reluctantly, because men cannot take it on. Although the crisis of masculi-
nity is understood to be, in part, produced by the social transformation, the
fact that women have survived it better than men is explained as stemming
from women's greater inherent strength compared to weak men. The crisis is
primarily narrated as manifesting itself in men's behavior at the level of
everyday life. This crisis talk is revealing with respect to constructions of
normative masculinity: the image of 'men in crisis' produces ideal masculi-
nity as marked by strength and an active stand in life.

   This crisis of masculinity was articulated almost exclusively by women;
only one male activist referred to it. He took a somewhat joking attitude
toward the interview and his quote below can be read as somewhat ironic.
However, it reveals cultural assumptions concerning gender:

SUVI: And what do you think, who is usually more active in societal life (*v
    obshchestvennoi zhizni*) – women or men?
IGOR′ IUREVICH: Women.
SUVI: Why?
IGOR′ IUREVICH: Because of their nature (*po prirode svoei*). Men are so lazy,
    they don't want to do anything. They want to lie on the stove (*lezhat′
    na pechi*).[9] And women can't but work, they have to participate every-
    where. (…) It has always been like this, such a situation. (*laughs*) (…)
    However, there is a worldwide trend now to delegate men's power to
    women. Who is your President [in Finland]? A woman. There you go.
    (Legal Aid Clinic)

The interviewee assumes that men and women are different by nature. He
constructs women as 'naturally' more active by contrasting them to lazy
men. He also sees women's greater activism not only as a Russian char-
acteristic, but as pertaining to the whole world. It is interesting that while he
defines men as inactive by their nature, his own life practices do not comply
with this assumption. He studies law, participates in volunteer work in the
Legal Aid Clinic and is engaged in paid work. This illustrates how inter-
viewees may understand the 'proper feminine/masculine' behavior to apply
to themselves and others differently, that is, 'I as a woman/man' as opposed
to 'women/men in general'.

In the interviews, representations of masculinity were more ambivalent than those of femininity. Women were characterized by active, moral and altruistic agency in every sphere of life, while men were on the one hand portrayed as active in paid work and (self-seekingly) pursuing material wealth and political power and, on the other hand, as passive, lazy and inert.[10] In the context of the crisis of masculinity, discourses on nationality intertwine with gender: women are narrated as representing the (stereotypical) best qualities of Russianness, while men are perceived as embodying its negative qualities. It seems that masculine identities are more under renegotiation than are feminine identities (see also Rotkirch 2000).

Institutional politics was also gendered in the interviews by drawing on the character repertoire. The absolute majority of the activists perceived institutional politics to be dominated by men. A division of labor based on gender-specific orientations and qualities was constructed in the socio-political arena:

SUVI: What do you think, who is more active in the sphere of societal life – women or men?

IVAN ROMANOVICH: Definitely women. It's not only in Tver′, it's true for Russia in general.

SUVI: Why? How would you explain this difference?

IVAN ROMANOVICH: Because women care more about society. Men are more active in politics. Politics for men is quite a prestigious activity. As for woman, she can be more active in society, in a societal (*obshchestvennyi*) sense. (…) This is all connected with society, socializing (*obshchenie*) and communication. That is why women are more active in this field. Women are more social than men. I think that's why it happens that there are more women in civic organizations, because they are seeking to participate. (Legal Aid Clinic)

Although institutional politics was explained to be dominated by men, several interviewees also argued that because of specific 'feminine' qualities, women should have a greater role in politics. This point of view was primarily put forward by female activists. 'Feminine' qualities were frequently understood as deriving from biology, as the quotes below illustrate. However, this type of biologically grounded essentialism was also toned down by recognizing the role of cultural factors in shaping gender differences:

RAISA BORISOVNA: Men are game-cocks! Because fighting is a treat for them. (…) I think the woman's role in society is to dampen this disgusting, appalling aggression, because it causes pain. And when women are allowed into the decision-making sphere, at least to the point of deciding: "Guys, stop! Let's try to find another solution. Let's negotiate, let's meet with each other". (…) That's how men are raised from the cradle: you're a warrior, you're a defender … And then also some physiology is

added. A man is a male. And males are always aggressive. (…) Men are everywhere like that. (CGS)

ELENA EGOREVNA: It seems to me that a woman (…) is bringing a **constructive** component to power and politics. A woman is not that selfish (*samoliubiva*), a woman is not that militant. I often say that man first of all sees **himself** and only then sees his job. And a woman sees her **job**, you see, we have a different psychological approach (*u nas drugaia psikhologiia*). That is why **a woman has to be** in politics, in power, in societal life (*obshchestvennaia zhizn'*). (…). But to do this she must have more freedom. (…) Not to be burdened with her family and house-keeping problems. (Women's organization)

Women are understood to complement men in the political arena: they can function as peacemakers and conciliators, clamp down on male aggressive-ness and warlike behavior and 'civilize' politics, because they have a differ-ent biological/psychic structure. This has also been a common discursive strategy of the gynocentric feminism in Western societies. Women are pre-sented as exercising control over men and as bringing 'moral' qualities to politics. This idea is reminiscent of the Soviet system, which also treated women as instruments of social control in relation to men (Buckley 2001a). Elena Egorevna in her quote also articulated gender inequality in partici-pation: she perceived women's domestic burden as inhibiting their opportu-nities to practice political citizenship. Some interviewees, however, also thought that not all women bring the 'civilizing effect' to politics. Women representing the administrative machinery were portrayed as 'not real women' who behave exactly like men. As one female activist argued, "I think, there's just a lack of women's decisions there [in the Duma]. Of course it would be great to have women as such there, because those 10 percent who are there now, they are not real women (*nastoiashchie zhensh-chiny*) (…). Well, they are already … just bureaucrats and nothing more, I think. They still look like women but in reality they have already got a kind of male approach to all problems".

   CGS activist Marina Grigorievna also advocated women's greater parti-cipation in politics, despite the fact that "politics is certainly a dirty business (*griaznoe delo*)". In her view, if women do not engage in politics, this 'dirt' will complicate their lives even more. Earlier in her interview, she narrated for women a subject position as the 'moral backbone of society'. She seems to view women as 'cleansing' politics with their moral superiority. She and a number of other activists celebrate Russian women's inner (morals, altruism, persistence, etc.) and outer beauty:

MARINA GRIGORIEVNA: In Tver' society – and actually in each society – women are first of all called upon to play such a moral role (*rol' nravstvennuiu*), right? In my view, it's very difficult in Tver' society,

especially if you look at young girls, unfortunately, this moral core, it's not that it has been lost, but it has been kind of erased. (…) A woman should still be a kind of a moral tuning fork (*nravstvennyi kamerton*) in society, in each and every society. (…) However, our women are still great. To be burdened with everything and manage to look so beautiful at the same time … (CGS)

Only one interviewee in the character repertoire articulated politics as a men's prerogative at a principled level. A male activist of the Trade Union of Health Care Workers defined only a limited role for women in politics and thought that men should be in charge of all significant political decisions:

You know, not that I'm against women's participation in politics – no. A woman, she should be a kind of a smoothing buffer (*smiagchaiushchii bufer*) between men. For instance, like a wife of a president. As for any tough, concrete political issues, the global ones, they should be solved by men.

The spatial repertoire: renegotiation of the public-private boundary

The spatial repertoire divides society along gender lines: women and men are portrayed as being active in different spheres and having different tasks. Women are explained to be more active in civic organizations because of their reproductive and domestic roles and responsibilities. Women's activism is interpreted to be instigated by social problems and hardships in everyday life (*byt*), and in relation to children and home.[11] They carry the main responsibility for the home, family and children, which makes them suitable and competent to participate in civic organizations. In this repertoire, work in organizations comes to be signified as an extension of the private sphere, as a sphere of *care*. Thus, articulation of civic activity with the metaphor of space entails a process of redefinition of the relationships between the public and private spheres.

RAISA BORISOVNA: Men are good partners when everything is well in the family. When the child is fine, everything's fine. When the child falls ill, it's mostly the mother who deals with it, not the father. Men tend to withdraw from problems. The same happens in the big family called "the society". When something goes wrong, women start running around, doing things, making efforts, trying to pull the family through. This is why women are more socially active – because we want to improve the situation where it's bad, where our help is needed. This means both my smaller family and my larger family – the country. (…) A woman always wants to improve something, to do something in a better way. If there is any chance to make things better she will do it. Just because if I have a home, I have to organize it, (and) a town is a

home, too. Generally speaking, a country is a home, too. That's why to improve living conditions at home – this is probably in woman's nature (*v nature zhenshchiny*). (CGS)

Raisa Borisovna articulates here civic activity with a strategy of 'familization', i.e. employs home and family metaphors to make sense of civic activity (Salmenniemi 2005).[12] She explains women's greater involvement in organizations by drawing a parallel between the public and the private spheres: women's roles in the home are extended to the city- and country-scope. She interprets women's activism as stemming from their 'nature'. Family functions here both as a concrete frame of reference to women's greater civic participation, and as a metaphor that is employed to make sense of civic activity and its relationship to politics and society at large.[13]

CGS activist Lidiia Maksimovna also employed the familization strategy, but in relation to state and institutional politics. She felt that political life should emulate family dynamics. According to her, "Men actually forget about our problems or solve our common problems not in the way they should be solved. I believe that it's happening, because there's no room for a woman there. Because in a family a hostess (*khoziaika*) is almost always a woman, the state should be constructed on family principles, a woman should actively participate in solving all the problems." This argument finds an interesting parallel from the French Saint-Simonian feminists of the 1830s. They also questioned the gendered division to public and private domains by drawing on the idea of essentialist sexual difference and argued that men are 'by nature' incomplete and thus incapable of governing without women (Rabine 1994).

Male interviewees also employed the spatial repertoire in explaining women's greater activism in civic organizations. In the quote below, the spatial repertoire intermingles with the character repertoire. Women are portrayed not only as caring, but also as potentially radical:

ALEKSANDR ANTONOVICH: In general women [are more active in civic organizations]. [Because] they connect everything with their everyday life (*s bytom*). If their kids are in trouble or the living conditions [are bad] they will undertake such steps men would never ever dream about. They will make complaints about the authorities, lobby some house committees, they will immediately set up their work. (…) I know that women have a stronger go-ahead personality (*probivnoi kharakter*). If you're listening at the meetings you will mainly hear their voices. Even yesterday the house committee had a meeting in our house. (…) Not a single man showed up (*laughing*). (…) Only women. My wife was elected the chairperson of this group. (Sports organization)

The interviewee interprets women as having specific competence in politics because of their domestic roles and responsibilities. He calls for more

women to enter politics, but also partly reproduces the traditional gender divisions in it (i.e., women should be in charge of social policy). He sexualizes women's exercise of power: the women's asset in the ascendancy is that they can rely on 'feminine tricks' when doing politics:

ALEKSANDR ANTONOVICH: If a woman was our president now, things would not go worse. (…) They [women] (…) understand family problems (…). It's like in society in general, they are closer to the idea of normal everyday life (*normal'nyi byt*). Men are more militant. (…) Women are more complaisant and basically they may build normal relations with other presidents (…). However, it seems to me that men will probably fail to do that. Maybe women's charm is playing a big role. (…) Gorbachev went to England to Thatcher, they made friends, they were kissing each other, they said she fell in love with Gorbachev (…). And if he had gone there as a man to a man there would probably have not happened what (…) happened. I mean, a woman in power – it's very important. (…) Mostly men are ruling. We should dilute it (…). I would say (…) that it should not be total, not fifty–fifty but let it be one third at least.

KATIA: At least let's say the social issues (*sotsial'nye voprosy*), they should basically be women's responsibility?

ALEKSANDR ANTONOVICH: Yes, yes! You are right, the social issues. (…) Because as I'm saying, women are solving the social issues. (Sport organization)

In the interviews, civic activity was also portrayed as a realm that has been left for women; it is not something they have necessarily chosen themselves. Trade union activist Alla Sergeevna considered men to be active in business, breadwinning and politics, while women were left to take care of the home and provide help and support in civic organizations. She problematized this division somewhat:

SUVI: And what is your impression, are women or men more active in the sphere of civic activities (*v sfere obshchestvennoi aktivnosti*)?

ALLA SERGEEVNA: You know my impression is that it's women. And, generally speaking, I have an impression that the world has turned "from its feet onto its head" (*s nog na golovu*). (…) There is for some reason an absolutely inadequate correlation between women's activeness and a number of women in governmental bodies, in the governments, among the presidents. Even in the parliaments. (…) However, women are actually carrying a very big load on their shoulders. I also know from my work experience that there are many more women [in the trade union], of course, and they are more active. (…) men probably believe that they'd better make money, on the one hand. I mean, a man is probably choosing between two directions – either business or politics.

That's why they are in both. (*laughing*) Well, so we are in the societal (*v obshchestvennoi*) [domain], what else has been left for us? To protect home (*domashnii ochag*) and colleagues at the same time. (TUHW)

Women's greater civic involvement was frequently explained in the interviews by alluding to men's breadwinner responsibilities that were interpreted as hindering their opportunities to participate.

SUVI: What do you think, why is it so that more women participate in civic organizations than men in general?

INNA ROMANOVNA: This is, I think, a simple question because men must earn money. (…) And that's why even if men participate in the activities of civic organizations they do it in an indirect way. For instance, they can simply be philanthropists and donors. (…) Women are dealing with all the executive and organizational issues of civic organizations and their activities. (…) However, there is a tendency that those women working in civic organizations are more or less financially supported by their husbands, because if they are not financially supported they simply cannot work there. (Resource center of civic organizations)

Inna Romanovna here defines women and men as having different participation strategies: women do the 'real' organizational work, while men may donate money in order to support this activism. She takes up social class as an integral factor conditioning women's participation in civic groups. In her view, not all women are equally able to work in civic groups, but rather civic activity is a privilege that women having a husband maintaining them can afford themselves. This hints at the fact discussed in the previous chapter, i. e., that organizational work very rarely offers a livelihood in the form of salary. Inna Romanovna's personal history also helps to highlight the link between gender, class and civic activity. She does not come from a wealthy family: at the time of the interview she lived in a small apartment together with her parents, sister and her family. However, her full-time participation in the civic organization was made possible by a grant from a foreign donor that allowed her to be paid a salary. She also explained her activism by saying that as she does not have a family of her own, she has much time to devote to organizational activities.[14]

The men's breadwinning role was not questioned in the interviews; it was taken in a matter-of-fact manner. Paid work was construed as an obstacle to men's civic participation, but for women the situation was more ambivalent. On the one hand, women's roles in the private realm were seen to facilitate their participation as these roles provide them with the necessary skills and qualities for civic work, but on the other hand, women's domestic burdens were also interpreted as leaving them little time for participation. In fact, those three activists in the data who perceived men to be more active than women in civic activity all alluded precisely to women's

domestic burdens as the main factor inhibiting their participation. Interestingly, there is almost complete silence in the data about the potential negative implications of *women's* paid work for civic participation – despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Russian women continue to be engaged in paid work (Ashwin 2006a, 2–3). On the contrary, in the case of men, domestic responsibilities do not emerge at all as a potential obstacle to men's participation in politics or civic groups.

   Thus, the domestic realm emerged as an obstacle in a different way to men and women in civic activity and formal politics. The private sphere was portrayed as a hindrance to women especially in relation to institutional politics, while it was portrayed more as a facilitator in civic activity. For men, by contrast, the role of a family breadwinner was interpreted as an obstacle to participation in civic organizations but not in institutional politics. How to explain this difference? I suggest that involvement in civic activity is seen as more flexible and thus more easily combined with domestic responsibilities than institutional politics, as civic activity is defined as a sphere of care, as an extension of the private realm. The boundary between civic activity and the domestic realm is perceived in this sense as more porous. The association of civic activity with home, family and femininity probably also entails that men are not expected to participate extensively in civic activities.

   The following quote illustrates how the lack of money and time are understood as centrally curtailing women's possibilities to practice political citizenship:

VIKTORIIA IVANOVNA: Take my friends for instance. They get up in the morning at seven or six to cook breakfast for their husband. For some reason, the husband cannot warm the cutlet up himself – he needs it served up and put into his mouth. Naturally, they think that they must clean the apartment, wash and iron clothes and such. And if, moreover, the husband is unemployed, the wife has to earn his living, too. Where would she find the time to participate in any feminist movement at all? And it's not senile ladies I'm talking about. These friends of mine, you know, are younger than myself. So, they serve their husband morning till night.

SUVI: How do you think the situation can be changed?

VIKTORIIA IVANOVNA: The thing is that in Tver′, I'm not sure what the male/female ratio is now – years have passed since the last census. But if we simply look at the men walking along our streets, they are first of all repulsively ugly. Second, they are feeble. And third, they want to use you. So, if my friends have trapped someone who is more or less decent, not ugly, (*laughter*) not stupid, without Down's syndrome, not an alcoholic, then I think they are afraid of losing this treasure. Let him use them, let them get up early, warm up the cutlets … i.e., he should be turned into an "invalid" unable to take care of himself, so that he won't escape. (…) If the household chores are not shared, (…) women won't

be able to cope with **anything**. (…) It's useless to yell that a woman can and must take the power into her hands, participate in the state administration, in the decision-making process. If she's burdened with housekeeping, (…) she just **does not have any time**. (…) However, they [women] don't really want to pull down their obligations (…). I'm surprised myself. (CGS)

This quote elucidates the ambivalence felt toward heterosexual relationships: marriage is a strong cultural norm, it is simultaneously desired and perceived as frail (Rotkirch 2000, 101). The quote also highlights the economic and emotional strains placed upon a marriage. The dismantling of the Soviet social security system and the transition to a market economy has increased poverty and income disparities. Economic instability, manifesting itself in the wage arrears and insecurities in employment, have made marriage, kin and social networks ever more important for everyday survival. In this sense, it is possible to conceive of the social transformation as a shift from public patriarchy to the direction of private patriarchy. The state socialist system embodied the principles of public patriarchy by diminishing the dependence of women on individual husbands and fathers and by making women as mothers dependent on the state (Marx Ferree 1997, 49). The Soviet state provided a rather extensive system of benefits, and although the system relied upon a dual-breadwinner model, it was nevertheless possible to achieve a fair standard of living in solo-breadwinner families. With the transition to a market economy and the curtailment of the state-funded social services, women have often become more dependent on *individual* men instead of the *state*, and thus gendered power relations have been reorganized in society. The differences in salaries between female- and male-dominated sectors have been increasing. Women tend to earn on average 63–65 percent of men's monthly wages and occupy the lower positions in the occupational hierarchy (Ashwin 2006a, 14; 2006b, 50). The gendered nature of economic power also manifests itself in the fact that 82 percent of the leading managers of small and medium businesses are men (Yurchak 2003, 72).[15] The cultural value attached to heterosexual marriage and family and the increased economic constraints may inhibit the renegotiation of the sexual division of labor in the private domain. Those male interviewees in this study who articulated sexual division of labor to hinder women's activism did not, as a rule, problematize this issue. By contrast, many women like Viktoriia Ivanovna above voiced discontent and would like to change the situation.

In the spatial repertoire, only one interviewee adopted a somewhat normative position and perceived men's roles as breadwinners and heads of the family as making them privileged to participate in politics. A member of a Veterans' Council characterized civic organizations as a proper channel for women's participation: "Men are still ahead [in politics], because of their position, responsibility for their family, for its economic well-being. We

can't say that **only** men or **only** women. Somewhere there are men and somewhere women. We do have *Zhenskaia Assambleia* [civic organization] in our city [and] region. There are women there."

The socio-structural repertoire and the feminist challenge

The socio-structural repertoire approaches gender differences in participation from the viewpoint of structural factors and socio-cultural practices. Civic activity is not articulated as a feminine sphere stemming from gender-specific qualities or domains, but gender divisions in the socio-political arena are understood as an effect of socio-cultural practices. Thus, this repertoire challenges the character and spatial repertoires that tend to draw on essentialist logic in explaining gender differences. As a subcategory in this repertoire there emerges a feminist repertoire that challenges the prevailing gender system and seeks to transform it.

The most important structural factor mentioned in the interviews is the demographic situation in Tver'. There are more women as a result of wars and of men's lower life expectancy, among other things, which is perceived as being responsible for women's greater activity. The interviewed trade union activists also explained women's greater activity in their union by the fact that health care is a female-dominated sector.

The feminist sub-repertoire was employed by some CGS members and it constructs women's and men's participation strategies as different because of cultural norms. Russian culture is perceived as associating leadership and public participation with masculinity. The interviewees perceived men to hold leadership positions in organizations, while women participate *en masse*, as functioners of organizational activities:

SUVI: What do you think, in society in general, who is more active in civic organizations – women or men?

BORIS ANTONOVICH: (pause) Probably men. They are active in different ways. I mean, men are more involved in it, they participate in it due to their position. However, women are more … at some point they are actively acting by means of their numbers. I mean, they are ready to participate when their life is getting worse. (…) Probably, men are still more active … just as people who more often occupy these decision-making positions (*vlastnye pozitsii*). (…)

SUVI: Why do you think there is such a difference?

BORIS ANTONOVICH: (long pause) Because masculine activity is articulated in this culture. I mean, according to a number of stereotypes and patterns (…) a man will behave in a more active way, he will be claiming a more conspicuous position.

CGS activist Ekaterina Nikolaevna constructed a gender division as existing in the civic sphere: men dominate such organizations as military-patriotic

groups and women, for example, family-planning organizations. She explained this division by socialization practices: boys play together with other boys and girls with other girls, and this pattern seems to continue in adult socio-political life. Feminist activists Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna also contemplated gender divisions in socio-political activism and women's lack of power and leadership. Women, in their view, tend to be more active in social issues, while men gravitate toward power and political parties. Valentina Ivanovna also thought that women do not wish to struggle directly with power structures – with men – but prefer to find other channels, such as civic groups:

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: In my view, there are *a priori* very many women activists, simply because there are probably more women than men.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: But all of them are at the low level. (…) At the decision-making level they seem to disappear. (…) I just have such a feeling. (…) They [women] are rather actively collecting signatures, they are holding all the meetings, they are organizing the work. But who is a leader? – I am sure these are men. (…) if [we think of political parties], then let's take "Edinstvo", for example.

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: There are only men there. (…) They are everywhere, occupying the leading positions. (…) It depends on [the type of civic organizations]. If we take the patriotic organizations, there are (…) more men there.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: I mean, there is (…) some niche here, that is, it depends on what these organizations are doing. If it's social (*sotsial'nyi*) or civic (*obshchestvennyi*) work, you would certainly find women there. If the organization aims at power, then there will be men there.

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: Career, prestige, and so on.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: (…) Women try to avoid open struggle against the authorities. They prefer other means of improving their lives. (…) there are many women but they are just functionaries, they are doing everything. And when it comes to the decision-making level, we can see it in trade unions, political parties and social movements, there are usually men there. (CGS)

In the opinion of Valentina Ivanovna, there are several structural and systemic obstacles to women's participation in politics: negative stereotypes, lack of necessary funds for political campaigns, lack of knowledge of how to organize political campaigns and how to avoid or make use of gender stereotypes. A number of CGS activists also questioned the traditional gender-bound division in politics and expressed an aspiration to break it. Viktoriia Ivanovna argued: "Women in power are always directed toward social policy. I think one should get hold of some financial committee that makes a difference, or the distribution of financial funds. Women are usually not allowed in those positions."

Interestingly, the chairman of a Veterans' club was the only one, in addition to CGS members, to subtly articulate gender inequality and women's discrimination in the political arena. He outlined the CPSU as having institutionalized male dominance and the current lack of women in politics as a continuation of this pattern:

EGOR IVANOVICH: There [in the USSR] men used to be more active. (…) The Party used to be the guiding and leading force of the society. The Party (…), at least during the early years, consisted of workers and peasants. The workers were men and the peasants were men (*rabochie – muzhchiny, krest'iane – muzhchiny*). (…) women participated less in that [party activities]. However, it is obvious even now (…) women, well, I don't want to say that word, are not permitted to, (*laughter*) but, at least, take the Duma – there is a small number of women there. As for the Government – there are just a few individuals. (…) There are mostly men everywhere for some reason. [I think that] women should actively participate in everything together with men and even more than men. (Veterans' club)

In the group interviews, the different repertoires of gender and their shifts emerged particularly vividly. The dynamic of the conversation contributed to the fact that gender relations were often discussed from a number of angles. A group interview with young human rights activists illustrates this polyphony well. It also shows how meanings attached to gender are not fixed but shift from one repertoire to another:

NATAL'IA VLADIMIROVNA: It seems to me that men would prefer to have their own business, to make money. And women, having allocated this burden [of making money] to men, go in for politics.

NIKOLAI SERGEEVICH: What are you driving at – am I lacking in maleness (*malo muzhkikh nachal*) or what? (*all laughing*). Is it as if I don't make money and I'm not doing anything serious?

NATAL'IA VLADIMIROVNA: No, nothing of the kind! You are just talented, you (…) can cope with everything. (…) It's just that men are more oriented toward, well, not demagogy but something more concrete. Because the businessmen are mostly men and women are more engaged in societal activities (*obshchestvennostiu zanimaiutsia*).

SUVI: And why is there such a difference that men are in business and women are in civic organizations? (*all laughing*)

IULIIA ANDREEVNA: It seems to me that men, they are lazy enough unlike women who start calling their colleagues in civic activism at the very moment they enter their home after a hard day's work. (…) I have rather rarely met people – I mean, men – who would come home at night after a hard day's work and who would still want to do something really important. (…)

NIKOLAI SERGEEVICH: I can't speak on behalf of all men. I personally have just been praised, I'm so glad about that. (*all laughing*) (Student human rights organization)

In the quote, Natal'ia Vladimirovna, drawing on the spatial repertoire, suggests that there exists a gender division in society: men are active in business, 'concrete issues' and in earning money, while women are more active in socio-political activities. It is interesting that contrary to the over-whelming majority of other interviewees, Natal'ia Vladimirovna here associates politics with women. Nikolai Sergeevich reacts to this and jok-ingly asks whether Natal'ia Vladimirovna sees him as lacking masculine qualities, since he is involved in the 'feminine' arena of civic activity. Natal'ia Vladimirovna, in reaction to this protest, interprets him as an exception to the rule. This destabilizes the binary logic of the division of labor. Iuliia Andreevna shifts next to the character repertoire and explains women's greater participation in civic groups as the result of men's laziness and lack of initiative, echoing the 'crisis of masculinity' discussed earlier. Nikolai Sergeevich cries out that he does not want to be taken as repre-sentative of all men; he seeks throughout the interview to disrupt the representation of gender relations that the female interviewees propose. Presumably the fact that women define civic activity as feminine uncomfor-tably questions his gender identity. Iuliia Andreevna gives an example of her own volunteer work in offering consultation on legal problems and argues that a notable difference exists between women's and men's behavior:

IULIIA ANDREEVNA: This opinion of mine is also based on the fact that (…) when I was working at the legal consultation [for poor citizens], let's say there was a woman client who had some problems. I'm saying to her that we would have her problem solved and she replies: "O.K. What shall I do?" So it's coming from her, not from me. (…) A man would say: "No, what would you do to have my problem solved?" (…) You can be 100 percent sure that each woman client would try to solve her problem herself while a man would try to make us solve his problem. And when I'm telling them that you should do something yourself, too, they reply: "Well, you are a civic organization so it's you who has to solve my problem."

NIKOLAI SERGEEVICH: However, there are exceptions. You have put us men to complete rout (*razgromila v pukh i prakh*).

IULIIA ANDREEVNA: No, I'm talking about my own experience. (…) Maybe someone else has a different experience when men are coming and saying: "All right, I'm ready to do everything, just tell me what I should do." I myself have met women only.

NIKOLAI SERGEEVICH: Generally speaking, according to the statistics, there are more women than men. (…) There are many civic organizations that are protecting women's rights. Men don't have such organizations.

They may only have something like "A Society of Beer-Lovers". (*laughing*)

IULIIA ANDREEVNA: Actually, we could have had men's civic organizations and men's rights organizations, or something like that, but historically it has so happened that a woman bears a greater social burden than a man. She has always been made responsible for children's upbringing. Women have more responsibilities.

NIKOLAI SERGEEVICH: Women are stronger in terms of morals, I believe. And men are physically stronger.

EVGENIIA DMITREVNA: (…) Other organizations (…) like sports, where they have fishing, beer and other activities, they are all-male. (*all laughing*) When it's believed that some goals should be pursued only by real men (*nastoiashchie muzhchiny*), an all-for-men organization is created.

Nikolai Sergeevich again protests in the beginning of the quote against what he sees as an excessive generalization. He moves to the socio-structural repertoire and points out that perhaps women participate more for demographic reasons. The interviewees also begin to contemplate the gender divisions in the civic sphere. Evgeniia Dmitrevna continues in the structural repertoire and argues that women have historically developed a greater responsibility for societal issues. Nikolai Sergeevich switches next to the character repertoire and defines women as morally more enduring and men physically tougher.

Another interviewee, a member of the local Resource center for civic organizations, offers a further illustration of the ambivalence and contradictions involved in explaining gender differences. His quote shows how even the same interviewee can draw on all three repertoires in making sense of gender. We discussed with him issues of gender equality and feminism. He thought that in Russia, gender equality and the arrangement of gender relations corresponding to feminist ideas are not possible in the same way as they are in the West, because of poverty, the prevailing crisis situation and lack of state policies facilitating it.

VIKTOR NIKOLAEVICH: The state should create such conditions [for reorganization of gender relations]. If, for instance, in the West the state has created favourable conditions for both women and men to make their choices (…) here there are still no such conditions. (…) Because most people's salary is much lower than average. (…) That's why when you live in poverty, it's as if you are in an extreme situation. If you are in an extreme situation only strict order (*chetkii poriadok*) will [help]. How do special military units (…) operate? If everyone there wants to make and follow his own decision … Let's imagine, we are in a situation … walking across the road. And suddenly a car is coming. And you and I are husband and wife. (…) I'm saying to you: "Run!" and I'm running. And you say: "No, I don't think so. I will not run", and we're just

staying on the road like this and we will both be run over by this car. We have a similar situation here. There can be only one way. (…) Again, nature itself (*samoi prirodoi*) or God has made it so that a woman is a woman and a man is a man, right? Even physiology is different. (…) Only in a state where the conditions have been created, that is, in a constitutional state or in a state that has already achieved a level of understanding, and the state itself is supporting (…) the opportunities for this freedom, then yes, then the freedom of both sexes is possible. And if there is no such freedom (…) and where we have this extreme situation (…) there should be only one way – either woman or man is in power. However, traditionally it has happened that it's a man who is in power …

The interviewee starts to unravel gender relations in the socio-structural repertoire. In the West, the state has created conditions that allow people to choose gender arrangements more freely than in Russia. The meaning of sexual difference is thus perceived as being different in Russia and the West. In a kind of reminiscence of the Soviet model, the interviewee defines the state as a central actor in transforming gender relations in society. He employs a military metaphor and interprets the extreme crisis in Russian society to entail that only a 'strict order' is possible, which means that traditional gender relations are a necessary key to survival. In a crisis situation, it is either women or men who have to take the lead, and the interviewee interprets that in Russia, the leadership role traditionally belongs to men. Interestingly, he perceives that the meaning of biology as the defining factor of gender relations *diminishes* in the conditions of societal stability and material well-being. In other words, if society is stable as in the West, 'traditional' gender relations can be reorganized. Thus, although the interviewee articulates gender relations in a framework of essentialism – as set by God and nature – he does not position them as immutable but leaves room for reinterpretation in time and space.

This type of destabilization of essentialism and gendered orders in the interviews can be read as an indicator that the definitions of gender are being questioned at some level, opening room for reinterpretation. Essentialist logic is challenged by the socio-structural and feminist repertoire and by the fact that interviewees frequently voice uncertainty, hesitation and perplexity. They, for example, use such expressions as "I don't know", "perhaps", "I suppose", and "this is only my opinion". Also the long pauses that some interviewees take can be understood as signalling uncertainty and hesitation. The interpretations drawing on essentialist understanding of sexual difference are also challenged when interviewees draw on several interpretative repertoires. Furthermore, in the thematic interviews, the framework for essentialism is most often not universal, but *national*. The interviewees do not usually generalize their claims to apply to all societies, but rather to all *Russian* women/men; here gender and nationality are intertwined. In this way, the interviewees relativize essentialism, as they take

into account the socio-historical context. Absolute, biologically grounded essentialism would fix gender identities outside time and space.

The inescapable difference

Let us now turn to the analysis of the survey data. The surveyed organization leaders were asked whether their organization better suits men or women. The majority of them did not see their organization as somehow gender-specific: 85 percent thought that their organization is equally open for and suits men and women. Only 9 percent claimed that it suits men better and 6 percent that it suits women better. When explaining this, the respondents drew on the gender neutrality and spatial repertoires. The majority of them referred to gender neutrality: the activities of the organization are important and interesting to all people regardless of gender. For example, a female leader of an environmental group argued: "What kind of division can there be? All depends on the qualifications, willingness, skill, concern for the problem." A male leader of a youth and children's organization, for his part, concluded that "It [participation] depends on basic human traits rather than gender criteria."

The spatial repertoire constructed a gender division of labor within the organization: the organization had different tasks available for men and women. Organizational work connected with health care and social issues was defined as women's work, whereas men were said to run the organization and take care of tasks requiring physical strength. For example, a male leader of a youth and children's organization stated that their organization has "a wide range of interests so that women work on their profile, and men – on theirs". A female leader of an education and culture group explained that "construction is the responsibility of men, and women are better in building contacts with organizations". This type of gender division of labor in the organizations is connected with the gender division of labor in Russian society at large. Traditionally, health care and education have been strongly female-dominated areas; for example, the great majority of doctors and teachers are women. This is also reflected in the civic sphere, as women dominate these fields in civic organizations.

Gender division of labor and the complementarity of gender relations it implies also emerged in another form in the survey. Complementarity was linked with parental identities: it was seen that both mothers and fathers are needed in the organization. A male leader of an education and culture organization commented that their organization "actually does the same job as parents do – takes care of education among youth; we want them to make their way in life." A female leader argued: "[Our] organization suits both [women and men], because there are no purely women's problems; problems in the family concern both women and men. Men cause problems for women, and women then solve these problems with the help of the very same men."

How did the organization leaders then explain if they considered the activities of their organization to better suit men? The spatial repertoire constructing gender-specific fields of organization clearly dominated here. Certain activities were defined as 'men's work': "Management is a job for men." (Man, human rights organization); "Defence is men's business." (Man, military group); "This is boxing, not figure skating!" (Man, sport group). A few leaders also employed the character repertoire and referred to 'masculine qualities'. A male leader of a youth organization explained that "we have to work with 'problem teenagers'; they tend to show more respect for men". In those organizations that were defined to better suit women, the character repertoire dominated. The leaders described women as having such qualities that make them more suitable for the organizational work: "They are more compassionate and better organized, get along with people better" (Woman, interest group); "Women are more assiduous, faithful to principles, persistent, careful in carrying out the tasks and affairs of the organization" (Woman, labor union). A couple of leaders of women's organizations also drew on the spatial repertoire and explained that because they focus on women's issues, they are *per se* more targeted for women.

The overwhelming majority of the organization leaders portrayed their organization as in principle open and suitable for both men and women. How did they then explain that their organization nevertheless had more male or female members? In the organizations where *women formed the majority of the membership* female dominance was explained most often by alluding to the character repertoire. Women were represented as more active, intuitive, empathic, organized, emotional and dutiful. This implies that these femininely marked qualities were understood to be needed in organizational work. Some respondents also referred to a lack of these qualities in men, or referred to 'masculine' qualities, which contributed to the weakness in men's participation.

> Why? That's a question for me, too. May be I'd like to see more men here, too, but Rerikh's[16] concept of culture gets a faster response from people with a subtler psychic structure, and that's women. Men are growing ruder these days, but this can be rectified. (Man, education and culture)
>
> The 'subconscious gender factor' ("*podsoznatel'nyi gendernyi faktor*") apparently does exist. Men are unlikely to stay here long. Women are ready to work for money, men want a Mercedes straight away. Women are hard-working – they have a higher working capacity than men, men would faint immediately. Women have a capacity to find gentler ways out of difficult situations: Women have more intuition. (Woman, 'other')
>
> Women are less primitive; they show more demand for spirituality. (Woman, education and culture)

Almost as often the socio-structural repertoire was employed. A female leader of a culture and education organization explained as follows: "Low

motivation among men, fear of pressure from public opinion, gender ste-
reotypes hindering co-operation between genders in organizations of this
kind." A female leader of an interest group referred to the demographic
situation: "There are generally fewer men still alive." Some respondents
drew on more than one repertoire. For example, a female trade union pre-
sident explained female domination in her union by saying: "It's a sector-
specific feature, and women are more inclined to societal work (*obshchest-
vennaia rabota*)." A number of respondents also drew on the gender division
of labor and parental roles in society as an explanation for women's greater
activism. Often this repertoire implicitly relied on the assumption of gender-
based qualities, which produce gendered positions and division of labor:

> Men are less active in civic (*obshchestvennye*) activities; they are more
> attracted to politics and business. (Woman, social welfare and health
> care)
>
> The man is the breadwinner; in the committee [organization], too, he
> does the more difficult but 'humble' part of the work (…). The woman,
> however, being the mother, has to work with more dedication to protect
> her children. (Woman, interest group)
>
> Men (fathers) are onlookers, not interfering in the work of the orga-
> nization; they lend financial support; because they're company owners,
> they sponsor the activities, while women (mothers) are more involved,
> act as organizers, work with children directly. (Woman, youth and
> children)

In *male-dominated groups* men's greater activism was explained by drawing
on the spatial repertoire. The organizational activity was defined as 'mas-
culine' and as something that is more of interest to men: "There are more
men in management, but more women in civic organizations (*obshchestven-
nye organizatsii*), to each according to their capacities" (Man, political
party). Some pointed out that in their organization, a gendered division of
labor existed: men realized the primary activity of the organization, and
women performed the secondary or supporting tasks. A number of respon-
dents also referred to structural explanations, for example: "There are more
disabled men, due to both industrial and traffic accidents (…)" (Man, dis-
abled people's group).

The leaders were also asked whether the leader's gender plays a role in
civic organizations, and if it does, how it manifests itself. Nearly half of the
leaders answered no and explained it as follows: "No, that depends on the
person" (Woman, sport and leisure); "Why would it matter? One can't say
that either women or men do a worse job; the one who works with diligence
would lead the organization (irrespective of sex)" (Man, culture and edu-
cation). Around one-third of the leaders thought that the leader's gender
matters in organizational activities and they explained this view most often
by invoking the character repertoire:

Depends on the aims of the organization. The aim of our organization is to "change the world by changing oneself", and a woman is better suited here, because she is less selfish, more altruistic and less focused on immediate results. (Woman, education and culture)

Depends on the organization. Men are disposed to drinking, but are harsher in their decisions. Women are spineless, they wouldn't pull the company out of a crisis quickly. (Woman, social welfare and health care)

A man is firmer in purpose and more capable of working toward the target. (Man, social welfare and health care)

Some respondents also drew on the spatial repertoire and constructed a gender division of labor. A male leader of a youth and children's group commented that if an organization "deals with social issues, a woman can be the leader". A female leader of a social welfare and health care organization argued in a similar vein that "the staff of organizations working on women's problems should be women, because they are closer to social issues." A male leader of a political party pointed out that "men are a better alternative [for a leader], they are more determined, steer activities more efficiently, set the direction. Women are good in doing what they are told to". Some leaders drew on the socio-structural repertoire and explained as follows: "There's also the effect of traditional gender stereotypes. There are plenty of organizations, it's mostly women working there, but the leaders are men" (Woman, education and culture); "Where it's a woman, there's more chaos, because it's more difficult for men to be subordinate to a woman. Adopting a business style of communication is a problem" (Woman, environment).

A group of leaders provided an ambivalent answer to the question about the leader's gender. They saw that in principle gender did not matter, but they nevertheless hinted at some sort of gender difference. A female leader of an education and culture group, for instance, replied that probably there were no differences between women and men leaders, but "women work better for the benefit of the organization, whereas for men it's a way toward promotion, self-assertion". Another female leader commented on the question as follows: "Looking outside from our subject area [what our organization does], it [the leader's gender] basically doesn't matter. Yet, men hold the posts associated with lots of money, and women – with lots of trouble (health care, culture, education). Women are where one can't earn high political dividends. (…)" One male leader of an education and culture organization drew on biology by stating that "[The leader's gender] doesn't matter, although it's often easier for men, because leadership is in their genes".

Why these repertoires?

Why then are gender relations in the survey and interviews explained and made sense of precisely through these four interpretative repertoires? What

types of functions do these repertoires have? The character, spatial and gender neutrality repertoires can be seen, in part, to stem from the Soviet gender ideology with its simultaneous emphasis on 'gendered virtues' and equality meaning denial of gendered power relations. This mix of equality and difference is a familiar explanatory system available for actors.

The recurrent references to Russian women's inclination to self-sacrifice, moral superiority and altruism that are reiterated in the character repertoire are a central cultural and historical element of Russian representations of women and femininity. The roots of this discursive formation can be located to the nineteenth-century Russian philosophical, historical and literary discourses that mythologized and sacralized Russian women and portrayed them as national saviors, and to the Orthodox Christian conceptions of femininity (Riabov 2001). As Rosenholm (1999, 47) notes, "the generation continuity between Russian women is cast by their accentuated moral superiority, which overshadows their material demands, or rather, raises women high above the "low" level of materiality". Rosenholm (ibid., 48–49) calls this a paradigm of female self-sacrifice and contends that it is indeed this self-sacrifice that has made women's history visible in the Russian systems of meaning. Femininity is in this discursive formation equated with motherhood: the beauty of Russian woman lies in her motherly qualities. This discourse of 'mythical Russian women' portrays women as embodying the best qualities of Russianness. They are signified as having both physical and moral strength (Riabov 2001). This strength is often produced as a contrast to weak men, a discursive strategy that was also employed in the character repertoire.

This discursive formation was also effectively circulated in and put to use by the Soviet state. In Soviet public discourses, women were represented as "the nobler, suffering sex, capable of greater endurance and self-sacrifice" and men as "selfish and irresponsible prone to abusing and abandoning their wives and children"; there was an "inevitable conflict between women's interests, construed as altruistic and pro-family and men's interests read as selfish and individualistic" (Fitzpatrick 1999, 143). Women, portrayed as carriers of decent values and being morally superior, were expected to 'cultivate men' (and the Soviet state, at large) and to "prevent them [husbands] from lapsing into degenerate behaviour" (Buckley 2001a, 158). Today's civic activity and the meanings it acquires are, thus, situated in this specific national gendered landscape and historical continuum, which helps to explain why civic activity is associated with these femininely marked attributes.

The spatial and character repertoires, explaining women's greater civic involvement with their gender-specific qualities and roles as mothers and caring subjects, can also be understood as circulating the discursive strategy of maternalism, or social motherhood.[17] In North America and Europe, women's civic activity and citizenship have been characterized by the discourse of social motherhood, which has offered itself as a legitimate channel by which women can enter the public sphere and gain social leverage. For

example, various nineteenth-century philanthropic and moral reform socie-
ties opened up for women paths to the public life by framing and legit-
imizing their activity within motherhood and domesticity (Sulkunen 1990;
Anttonen 1997; Fraser 1997). Social motherhood was also a central strategy
for women entering the public sphere in Imperial and Soviet Russia. The
upper-class women in Imperial Russia were active in charitable activities
among women, the poor and prostitutes, and strove to promote women's
education and professional life (Liborakina 1996; Stites 1978). The official
Soviet women's organizations also partly built upon this tradition of social
mothering. For example, *Dvizhenie zhen*, a movement of wives that was
organized in the 1930s, was reminiscent of the charitable activities of
Imperial Russia (Fitzpatrick 1999, 158).[18]

I interpret that, by circulating the discursive formation of 'mythical Rus-
sian women', the rhetorical pair of strong woman/weak man, and specific
feminine roles (social motherhood), which manifest themselves in the spatial
and character repertoires, women activists in Tver′ seek to transform their
position, which could easily be perceived as that of a victim and an object of
exploitation – women performing civic work without power positions or
material resources – into a position marked by persistence, strength and
pride. In other words, they construct themselves as *agents* and *subjects*. By
alluding to the 'feminine virtues' and motherly roles, women narrate them-
selves visible in the existing discourse/power regime. By telling about their
dedication and care for other people, they give to their activism a 'higher
meaning' (cf. Rosenholm 1999, 49). The character and spatial repertoires
function as a source of dignity and self-respect for female activists. In this
way, they seek recognition for their work in a situation in which they have
very little formal power and few resources. They interpret their work at
home and in civic groups as more important for Russian society than
formal political institutions that are perceived as corrupted and functioning
according to the logic of self-interest. However, those male activists who
employ the spatial and character repertoires often reproduce the prevailing
gender system in the socio-political sphere.

The discursive strategies of 'mythical Russian women' and social
motherhood are linguistic resources that are available and feasible to
making sense of gender relations in socio-political activity. They can be
conceived of as practices of trans-coding (Hall 1997): by constructing a
positive identification and celebrating 'feminine virtues', women activists try to
carve out niches and a sense of agency in a social climate that has experi-
enced a revival of patriarchal and sexist rhetoric (Attwood 1996). By draw-
ing on family/home analogies and praising women's altruism and moral
superiority, female activists strive to take over the civic sphere and make it
their legitimate area of activity. One can suggest that when women are
considered to perform the same tasks in the public sphere that they perform in
the private – caring, nurturing, upbringing – their activism is more easily
accepted. The articulations of gender in the spatial and character repertoires

also resemble the ideas of Western gynocentric feminism that construe women and men as essentially different and emphasize such themes as reproduction, motherhood and women's experience (which is understood as radically different from men's) (cf. Anttonen 1997, 33–34).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1996/1985) has coined a term 'strategic essentialism' by which she means a *conscious* risk that women take when they mobilize and frame their activities through 'womanhood'. However, I suggest that the term 'tactical essentialism', drawing on de Certeau's (1984) distinction between strategy and tactic, could be more instructive in describing the trans-coding practices of Tver′ women activists.[19] For them essentialism is not a clearly articulated and consciously chosen strategy; rather it offers them a feasible and familiar frame of reference – and one which is also recognized by the general public – that can be used as a tactical tool to justify agency. It can be seen as a way to try to generate value and stop things becoming worse (cf. Skeggs 1997, 102).

Essentialism as a tactic is, however, ambivalent. It can both potentially destabilize gendered power structures and contribute to reproducing them. On the one hand, it can solidify and legitimize existing patterns of gendered agency and division of labor by relying on the complementarity of sexes. This tends to exaggerate differences between women and men and obscure differences among women and men, and thus reinforce the very same gender hierarchy it tries to overcome in the first place. Tactical essentialism also runs the danger of marginalizing women politically within the existing gender division of labor, as moral power in women/mothers does not necessarily transform into political decision-making power (cf. Segal 1987, quoted in Lister 1997, 152). On the other hand, tactical essentialism may also have a potential of opening spaces of agency for women. Female interviewees who rely on the essentialist logic in explaining their civic and political participation use it to demand greater political leverage and to transform gendered power structures in institutional politics. This highlights the fact that the value of essentialism is crucially dependent on *who* practices it (Fuss 1994). In the hands of a hegemonic group it can be a powerful tool of ideological dominance, whilst among subaltern groups it can also function as a tool that may disrupt power structures and hierarchies. Spivak offers strategic essentialism as a temporal strategy, but Fuss (ibid.) has posed an important question of whether a temporal strategy can gradually, without noticing it, turn into a permanent one. In other words, when does essentialism still have destabilizing power and when does it begin to create barriers to women's agency?

Gendered practices of participation

How then do the foregoing interpretative repertoires translate into practices? If civic activity is discursively construed as feminine, does it mean that women form the overwhelming majority of the membership in civic

organizations and men are dominant in institutional politics? The survey results from Tver′ indeed reveal that women tend to participate in civic organizations more than men. In 54 percent of the surveyed civic organizations women form the majority of the membership, while 33 percent have a predominantly male membership. In only 12 percent of the organizations are women and men equally represented. If we exclude political parties from the sample, female domination increases to 56 percent.[20] As was shown in Chapter 2, men tend to lead civic groups more often than women.[21] Thus, although women tend to participate in organizations more than men, men are leaders more often. This can be interpreted as a manifestation of gendering practices, such as a cultural association of leadership with masculinity.

This same pattern was also repeated in perestroika-era socio-political movements and organizations. They were most often run by men, while women's participation took place at the grassroots and rank-and-file level.[22] Thus, women and men tended to use different channels of participation and were differently positioned in socio-political activities. This pattern of women's active involvement in the community-level groups and voluntary organizations more than in formal politics has been noted in a number of Western societies, too (Bergman 2002, 170–71; Lister 1997). However, in the Finnish civic organization sector women and men tend to participate in equal numbers (Nylund 1998).

The analysis of the surveyed civic organizations in Tver′ also reveals that women and men tend to be active in different types of organizations. The overwhelming majority of social welfare and health care as well as education, environmental protection and culture organizations were female-dominated, which mirrors the gender division of labor in the labor market.[23] In fact, none of the education and culture organizations had a predominantly male membership. By contrast, all military-patriotic groups and human rights groups were male-dominated, as were five of the six surveyed political parties.[24] Regarding those organizations that had equal numbers of male and female participants, the largest fields were sports and leisure groups and education and cultural groups. However, in none of the organizational sectors did the organizations that have as many male as female members constitute over half of the organizations.

Half of the youth and children's organizations had more male members, which may seem somewhat surprising, since children have traditionally been seen as 'women's territory'. Male dominance in this area may be partly due to the Putin administration's programme of patriotic education in Russia. The programme is highly state-centered and masculinist, aiming specifically at improving the reputation of military service and at attracting young men to participate in it. Youth organizations are defined in the programme as a central agent implementing this programme and they also have received considerable financial support from the local authorities for this task (see *Kontseptsiia patrioticheskogo vospitaniia grazhdan RF*).

The organization leaders were asked about under-age children living in the same household with them (their own children, grandchildren, etc.). This question was asked in order to learn about time resources at their disposal. As was discussed earlier, a number of activists perceived women's domestic responsibilities as constraining participation in civic organizations.[25] Does the survey lend support to this claim? Fifty-two percent of the leaders did not have any under-age children, 42 percent had one or two and 6 percent three or more children. The fact that the majority of leaders had no under-age children living with them may be connected with the age of the leader: over half of them were 41–60 years old. We can assume that for most of them, if they have children, the children have already moved away from home. Presumably this leaves them with more time resources to participate in civic activities. This issue was also touched upon in the thematic interviews:

SUVI: And why do you personally want to take part in the Center's activities?
LIDIIA MAKSIMOVNA: Well, it's of much interest to me. Also, I spent quite a while at home with children. And also when I was working, I had to hurry home as soon as possible anyway, to take care of the kids. Now the children have grown up and so I have lots of leisure time. And I'd like to use this time for my own benefit, and for the benefit of others. (CGS)

SUVI: Do you think it's women or men that are more active in societal life (*v sfere obshchestvennoi zhizni*) normally? (…) In politics, in civic organizations?
NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: In politics – it's men. In societal life – women usually. And I have an explanation for this prevalence of women. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong. But women, they need socializing (*obshchenie*) more than men do. Especially at a certain age, when children have grown up, a woman gets satisfaction from societal (*obshchestvennaia*) life. She feels she's still needed, she can socialize there.[26] (City Administration)

A cross-tabulation analysis of the number of under-age children and the leader's gender reveals that differences between female and male leaders are statistically significant.[27] Sixty-six percent of female leaders had no children and 34 percent had one or more, whilst the figures were in the opposite order for men: 40 percent had no children and 60 percent had one or more. This indicates that women can better participate in civic activities when they do not have under-age children, while for men under-age children do not seem to inhibit activism in the same way.

Women's participation in the institutional political sphere reveals a strikingly different picture. At the same time as women participate actively in civic organizations, women's parliamentary representation has notably decreased. In the 1990s, as the electoral system changed and the quota for

women in the legislature was revoked, women's representation gradually began to decline. In the current State Duma 2004–2007, only 9.8 percent of the deputies are women and in the regional legislatures (*zakonodatel'noe sobranie*), including in Tver′, the figure has been around nine percent (Aivazova 2004, 91). The increasing recruitment of *siloviki*[28] to key political positions is bound to further marginalize women from political power. However, in the Tver′ city assembly (*gorodskaia Duma*), the figure of women deputies was notably higher, 26 percent (in 2005), but it is still much lower than the share of women leaders in civic organizations. Thus, it seems that women can enter the field of civic organizations and achieve a leadership position there more easily than in institutional politics.

How could we explain these gendered participation practices in the socio-political field? The demographic structure was often mentioned in my data as an explanation for women's greater involvement in civic groups; could it explain gender differences in participation? The demographic statistics from 2001 reveal that for every 1,000 men there are on average 1,193 women in Tver′. In the age group 25–29, there are fewer women than men, but from the age group 30–34 onwards the number of women exceeds the number of men, and the gap gradually increases toward the elder age groups. (*Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe* …). However, the fact that there are statistically more women than men does not explain gender differences in participation. If demographic indicators were to explain them, women should also dominate political parties and legislatures, but as was shown earlier, that is not the case.

I suggest gender differences can be best explained, first, by the symbolic dimension of the gender system: civic activism and institutional politics are attached gendered meanings, which legitimize different types of participation strategies for women and men. The political discourse in Russia is openly sexist and misogynist and questions the legitimacy of women's participation in politics (Sperling 137–39; Popkova 2004, 173), which effectively blocks women's participation in formal politics. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, civic activity is defined as a sphere of care, in which 'feminine' qualities and skills can be legitimately made use of.

Second, the structural dimension of the gender system is also of great significance. Here Bourdieu's theory of capital is instructive. The changes in the relative weight of different types of capital as a result of the social transformation of the 1990s have rearranged the socio-political space and practices and in this process gender has played a key role. In the Soviet Union, the meaning and weight of economic capital was officially, and to a large extent in reality, insignificant, but under post-Soviet conditions its relative importance has strongly increased, which is manifested in the processes of social stratification and reconfiguration of the class structure. In the Soviet Union, women were concentrated in the low-paid sectors and jobs and they never reached the higher echelons of political power. Thereby they had a disadvantaged structural position when the competition for

economic resources and political power began at the beginning of the 1990s. Although the nature of political capital also has changed since the collapse of the Party structure, political capital is still of great importance. Political and economic powers are tightly intertwined (Evans 2002; McAuley 1997; Kryshtanovskaya and White 2002; Ledeneva 2006) and firmly in the hands of men, who, for this reason, have better opportunities to participate in party-political struggles and dominate the political field. This close link between and the mutual convertibility of political and economic capital in Russia functions, I suggest, as a major mechanism of the production and perpetuation of male dominance in the formal political system.

In this situation, civic activity has opened up paths for women's socio-political agency. In contrast to formal politics, civic activism does not require large financial resources or powerful contacts. Arguably, participation in grassroots groups is also combined more easily than institutional politics with domestic responsibilities, the burden of which tends to rest mostly on women's shoulders. Thus, women can participate in civic organizations more easily than in institutional politics. Educated women especially have been able to make use of their cultural capital in the civic sphere (cf. Chapter 2). Cultural capital can be accumulated and sometimes translated into economic capital with the help of foreign donors and governmental support. Women have also been able to make use of their social capital in the civic sphere. Much of Soviet everyday life was lived in the semi-public sphere where women had a strong position. Everyday life was structured upon and maintained by 'matrifocal practices', i.e., women's intergenerational social, economic and emotional ties (Rotkirch 2000, 120). Women often accumulated the social capital of the family by being responsible for maintaining social networks of exchange and common friends, while men's social networks tended to be more specialized and formed around work, and this tradition also continues in contemporary Russia (Tartakovskaya and Ashwin 2006). The fact that women participate in civic groups more actively than men (at least in Tver′) may indicate that contemporary women's activism builds on this tradition of getting things done not through official state and political structures, but via more informal channels, such as civic organizations.

The perceptions of femininity and masculinity affect the types of capital it is possible for women and men to collect and where and how it is legitimate for them to use them. I suggest that femininity as articulated in the spatial and character repertoires can, at least to some extent, offer symbolic recognition and be used as a currency in civic organizations, while in institutional politics it is more difficult. Weigle (2002, 120) has observed that many activists of the perestroika-era democratic movement moved from civic activity into formal politics and the emerging private businesses during the 1990s. I suggest that this shift was first and foremost possible for male activists – considering the male dominance in formal politics – and this move opened a window of opportunity and, indeed, a demand for women's

activism in civic groups. We can say that men, in general, have been able to convert political capital into economic, and economic into political capital in the fields of formal politics and business, while for women, in general, it has been more feasible to convert social and cultural capital into economic capital and maintain these forms of capital in the field of civic organizations.

Women's and men's different participation strategies could also be explained by the gendered nature of social networks in Russia. Leisure, friendship, work and everyday life in Russia tend to be differentiated according to gender and thus men and women are engaged in gender-specific worlds (Tartakovskaya and Ashwin 2006, 173). As private networks are the dominating channels of recruitment in civic organizations (cf. Chapter 2) and, according to Renz (2006), in institutional politics, I suggest this indicates that women and men tend to recruit new participants to organizations and political positions first and foremost among their own gender. Gender divisions in socio-political activities could thus reflect and reproduce the gender divisions of Russian society at large.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified four repertoires that gender socio-political agency in different ways: character, spatial, socio-structural and gender neutrality repertoires. Civic activity tends to be discursively associated with femininity and institutional politics with masculinity. Both in the survey and in the thematic interviews, spatial and character repertoires are often employed, while the repertoire of gender neutrality emerges primarily in the survey data. The socio-structural repertoire also is employed more often in the survey than in the interviews. I interpret this difference in the 'order of repertoires' to indicate a discrepancy between organizational practices and available discursive constructions of femininity and masculinity. Gender is not perceived to matter as much in the context of 'me' and 'my organization' as in the context of civic organizations and political parties and women and men 'in general'. When the interviewees contemplate gender in civic organizations and politics in general, they voice more essentialist interpretations of sexual difference than when they talk about themselves or their organization.

Women in Tver′ participate in civic organizations more than men, but despite this, men run organizations slightly more often. There are also significant gender divisions within civic organizations; women and men tend to be involved in different kinds of organizational activities. Despite women's active participation in civic groups, they are dramatically under-represented in formal political institutions. Gender differences in socio-political participation can be explained by cultural expectations about feminine and masculine behavior and the gendered nature of social networks and distribution of capital.

The fact that women tend to be more actively involved in civic organizations than men can be seen as a gendered effect of transition. On the one

hand, civic organizations have offered women a site in which to accumulate and convert social and cultural capital, to realize themselves, and potentially gain a feeling of efficacy and empowerment. On the other hand, we can also argue that the women's workforce is exploited in civic organizations. As the state has withdrawn from its social obligations and people have ended up without necessary public services and safety nets, it is precisely women who have started to fill this gap in the voluntary sector, frequently without any payment. As the research results in Tver′ and in other Russian localities show, the majority of the organizations rely on volunteer work and social welfare and health care is the biggest sector in the organizational field. By contrast, the close link between and mutual convertibility of political and economic capital in Russia function as the mechanism that produces and perpetuates male dominance in the formal political sphere.

I suggest that the association between civic activity and femininity is partly underpinned by larger shifts in discourses in conceptualizing 'civil society' and its aims and functions.[29] In a study of Russian political and scholarly discourses on civil society, Pursiainen (2004) sketches a shift from more liberal toward more authoritarian discourses during the 1990s. In the late 1990s, a dominant discourse emerged based on an idea of a strong paternalistic state and formal procedural democracy with a third-sector-like civil society mobilizing society to help the state. Thus, there has been a tendency to move from a 'civil society against the state' toward a 'third sector with the state'. I suggest this conceptual shift goes hand in hand with defining civic activity as feminine. The idea of civil society as a third sector, not as a political opponent but rather as a helpmate of the state particularly in the social sector, entails a discursive shift from 'political and masculine' to 'social and feminine'. We can conceive of this as a process of re-establishing a hierarchical partnership between the state and women reminiscent of the Soviet period. In the Soviet Union, the state forged an alliance with mothers by defining motherhood as a valued service to the state (Ashwin 2000, 11). Now the state is again a partner, obviously not an equal one, of 'social mothers', that is, female civic activists. This implies that the voluntary sphere has partly turned into a sphere of 'care', broadly speaking, where women bear and act against the social costs of the transition.

4 Action and affective ties

Identity formation of the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies

The next two chapters will investigate collective identity formation – the construction of the 'we' – in the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies (CGS)[1] and the Trade Union of Health Care Workers (TUHW) in Tver′. The analysis will highlight how these two different organizations define their goals and repertoires of activity and how they locate themselves in the socio-political landscape. The CGS is a grassroots feminist organization founded during the post-Soviet era that co-operates with foreign donor agencies. In contrast, the TUHW was established during the Soviet era, has a nationwide organizational structure and collaborates closely with the state. The common denominator for both organizations is that their membership is female-dominated.

In analyzing collective identity formation, I draw inspiration from frame analysis (Snow and Benford 2000; Zdravomyslova 2004), which conceives of collective identity as consisting of four identity frames: the diagnostic, prognostic, strategic and self-identity frames. The diagnostic frame offers an assessment of the current state of affairs: the problems the group seeks to address and an interpretation as to how these problems have come about. The prognostic frame presents the goals of activity: what the group seeks to achieve, and a vision of the desirable future. The strategic frame defines the plausible repertoires of activity, that is, the means to achieve the goals. The self-identity frame – the core of collective identity – refers to the definitions, names and meanings the group assigns itself.

This chapter shows that the CGS has a multidimensional collective identity that allows its members to connect themselves with the group in different ways. This collective identity is reinforced by the multiplex affective ties that unite the participants, but these ties also engender a certain inward-looking orientation in the group. The chapter begins by exploring the roots of the CGS that go back to a women's group called *Zhenskii Svet* (Women's Light).[2] The history of *Zhenskii Svet* also serves to illustrate the development of women's organizations in Russia in the 1990s. In the next section I outline the basic characteristics of the CGS, after which I focus upon examining its aims and repertoires of activity. The aims and means to achieve them are organically connected with identity formation: 'who we

are' is equally about 'how we do things' and 'what we want to achieve'. After this, I move on to analyze the central dimensions of the CGS's self-identity that is constructed in the process of identification with civil society and feminism, and the naming of allies and adversaries. I will also discuss the tension between the discursive adherence to a team-based organizational structure and the gravitation towards the leader in the CGS.

Resistance from the margins

The CGS was established at the end of the 1990s and was formally registered in 1999. It grew out of a local women's club called *Zhenskii Svet*, which was initiated during perestroika by Valentina Ivanovna Uspenskaia, the current leader of the CGS.[3] *Zhenskii Svet* is a central reference point for the CGS, as both groups were founded by and associated strongly with Valentina Ivanovna.

A central feature of *Zhenskii Svet* was its subversive position vis-à-vis Soviet organizational practices. *Zhenskii Svet* had an informal character and was not registered. It was among the first grassroots groups that began to organize in Kalinin (Tver′) as a result of the political liberalization of perestroika. Before founding *Zhenskii Svet*, Valentina Ivanovna had already engaged in covert resistance against the Soviet regime. Instead of teaching about 'how to build communism' she began to lecture her students about women's history and organization. *Zhenskii Svet* thus grew out of Valentina Ivanovna's work as a university teacher and of her interest in gender studies. As she put it,

> *Zhenskii Svet* had its origin in my interest in feminism and my wish to share my knowledge with others. Also, it always happens that a teacher has students who are around. So, my former students, my current students, my women colleagues started having meetings every week or once every two weeks … .

Zhenskii Svet, like the CGS later, was formed by a group of Valentina Ivanovna's students, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances. Valentina Ivanovna described *Zhenskii Svet* as a club (*klub*), a small group (*malen′kaia gruppa*), a network of her acquaintances (*set′ svoikh znakomykh*), and a women's circle (*krug zhenshchin*). In this respect, being an informal club, gathering at first at Valentina Ivanovna's home, it was typical of the semi-public activity of the perestroika period and reminiscent of *kruzhki*, the typical mode of organization of the intelligentsia in nineteenth-century Russia (Alapuro 1993, 205).[4] Valentina Ivanovna deliberately did not want to make it or call it an 'organization', and did not wish to register it. An organization, as she then conceived it, was too closely associated with the Communist Party organization from which *Zhenskii Svet* wished to disassociate itself. She argued:

> *Zhenskii Svet* did not seek official registration, this is a matter of prin-
> ciple for me. I don't want that. I've always wanted it [*Zhenskii Svet*] to
> remain open. The one thing I've always wanted to avoid is turning it
> into a party, into a closed-membership group. With membership fees! I
> wanted an open society (*otkrytoe obshchestvo*). I mean, an open orga-
> nization, with no coercion.

The activities of *Zhenskii Svet* were, right from the outset, informed by
'doing it differently' vis-à-vis Soviet organizations. The core distinction was
drawn between closed versus open and formal versus informal: Soviet
organizations with a closed membership versus *Zhenskii Svet* as an open,
informal (*neformal'naia*) group. This distinction was widespread among
perestroika-era independent organizations because they as a rule wished to
avoid centralized structures and bureaucracy. Contrary to Soviet organiza-
tional culture, membership in a group was no longer a public duty, but a
private matter (White 1999, 168). An open society is one of the key concepts
of and guiding principles for Valentina Ivanovna, both in *Zhenskii Svet* and
in the CGS.[5] The *raison d'être* of *Zhenskii Svet* was to create a counter-
space and alternative ways of sociability to official organizations. *Zhenskii
Svet* gradually became a more public organization and had open gatherings
at a public library. The meetings attracted women from all walks of life. The
activities of *Zhenskii Svet* included lectures, discussions, the dissemination
of information about women's history and feminism, and the establishment
of a library.

   As *Zhenskii Svet* started its activities during the Soviet era, it had to deal
with attempts to control its activities by the Communist Party. Valentina
Ivanovna was, for example, summoned for a 'reprimand' to the regional
Committee of Soviet Women (*Komitet Sovetskikh zhenshchin*), the official
Soviet women's organization. As Valentina Ivanovna recalled, the women
activists in the Committee accused her of organizing a 'private' organization
and realizing selfish personal ambitions. In Soviet society, all pursuits out-
side of Party structures were viewed with suspicion and labeled as con-
demnable individualism. However, incidents of state control also occurred
after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. At the end of the 1990s, an
FSB officer came to check the CGS's lectures in order to see whether the
group was engaged in politics. Valentina Ivanovna recalled saying to the
officer that if the security service could control civic activities in the Soviet
times, it would be futile now because of the large number of civic groups.
Valentina Ivanovna nevertheless invited the officer to listen to the lecture.
Afterwards the officer sighed "Well, okay, Valentina Ivanovna. I see that
you are not engaged in politics." Valentina Ivanovna quickly replied:
"Depending on what you mean by politics."

   Contacts with foreign women's groups turned out to be an extremely
important resource for *Zhenskii Svet*. It began to use the official twin-city
framework to further its interests. This illustrates how activists creatively

appropriated official frameworks and used them for their own purposes. Tver′ had close contacts with its German twin city Osnabrück, but it went without saying that they took place only at the level of the political elite. However, at the end of the 1980s this situation gradually changed. Valentina Ivanovna established contacts with German women activists visiting Tver′, and these contacts turned out to be the beginning of *Zhenskii Svet*'s international co-operation. In 1992 Valentina Ivanovna travelled to Osnabrück and the German activists paid a visit to Tver′ in the same year. *Zhenskii Svet* organized several public meetings for the townspeople to meet the Germans. This again broke with the Soviet tradition of monopolizing foreign visitors by members of the political elite.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: This could never happen [in Soviet times]! For ordinary people to be allowed to meetings with foreigners. (…) Over a hundred people came to the Herzen Library (…) it was packed, not a single vacant seat. I chaired the meeting, the roundtable, and the women from Germany said: "What a powerful women's movement you have here!" And I said: "That's not true, we don't have any women's movement. People are here not for the sake of the women's [movement], but rather to have a look at real foreigners." (*laughing*) (…) I mean, I didn't delude myself. It certainly wasn't a women's movement yet …

By the mid-1990s, however, *Zhenskii Svet* had little by little descended into a crisis (see Hemment 2007). It became apparent that the club needed to specialize. The group's participants had different interests and perceptions of what constituted activism, and different ideas of what the group was and should be about. In this sense, *Zhenskii Svet* was a typical example of a citizens' organization of the perestroika period: a heterogeneous group without a clearly defined ideology, membership or structure, but with lots of enthusiasm. A problem arose over how to find a common language and interests in such a heterogeneous group, and how to accommodate different conceptions of activism. In the next quote Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna, another original member of *Zhenskii Svet* and a current member of the CGS, reflect on this issue.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: Even some less educated women got interested, the backgrounds were very varied [in *Zhenskii Svet*]. All kinds of people came there. Yet, some had a certain mentality, more focused on the subject [gender], whereas others simply wanted to have a good time in good company. Remember one woman there?
SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: / To have tea, bake a pie.
VALENTINA IVANOVNA: / Do you remember, [she] once said, she'd bring mashed potatoes and cutlets?
SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: Terrible! (…)

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: (…) I was feeling very diffident, this happening right in front of me. First there is no [women's] movement and then … It was, however, a very nice time when we were based in the library (…). We had our own big room there, and we started collecting our own library. We wanted people to have free access to the literature, for people to read and be able to discuss something afterwards. However, as it turned out, (…) very few women wanted to read something and discuss it afterwards. The main disposition was: "All right, tell us more about something, please!" (…) On the one hand, this was a period of growth, but, on the other hand, the difficulties of working in a mixed group became obvious immediately. (…) Let people do what they are interested in. If you want to paint eggs for Easter … /

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: / Go for it! Sure, why not?

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: (…) That is, as soon as we started talking of serious things, problems arose. I think it's the same everywhere. So first (…) everybody was involved in everything, but then it became clear that when everybody does everything it doesn't work, because this could result in a slapdash approach (*profanatsiia*).

As the quote reveals, Valentina Ivanovna became disturbed, because some *Zhenskii Svet* members waited for her to give them a lecture instead of engaging in conversation. This contradicted the idea Valentina Ivanovna had about feminist organizations: she did not feel comfortable in a situation where one person possessed knowledge and the others were merely recipients of it.[6] Some participants of *Zhenskii Svet* would have liked Valentina Ivanovna to take a stronger leadership role in the group.

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: I think it was one of the main reproaches. "Why doesn't Valentina Ivanovna tell us what to do? (…) We're willing to do what she says."

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: I destroyed this image of the boss who is supposed to [instruct]: do this and that. (…) many were unable to handle this approach. They needed someone to make decisions for them. They were willing to participate, as long as I told them what to do. I don't think that's a feminist approach.

According to Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna, the main division in *Zhenskii Svet* arose between women who wanted informal socializing and women who were interested in feminism and scientific activity. Another important factor that brought about contradictions and led to the dissolution of *Zhenskii Svet* was the international aspect in activism that emerged in the 1990s. *Zhenskii Svet* started to receive visitors from abroad and, for the first time, opportunities arose for Tver′ activists to travel abroad. As the economic situation disintegrated in the 1990s, these foreign resources – trips, grants, etc. – became ever more desirable. This turned out to be one of

the most problematic, even traumatic, points in the evolution of *Zhenskii Svet*.[7] It created painful personal conflicts between the participants.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: And then another problem appeared (…): for quite a few women these meetings [of *Zheskii Svet*] became something like a duty they had to fulfil in order to be then **taken** to Germany, to America (…). Well, one could say: "Did I just waste my time coming here? When are we going to Germany?" (…) When an elderly woman, a teacher, saw nothing was happening, she came up to me and said: "I've been coming here for a quite long while, but when am I going to be taken to Germany?" (…) I told her: "Never". (*laughing*) "Why? You went there last year!" (…)

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: There were also, I think, four people who visited Germany, did their shopping and that's it. (…) Quite a few women associated the women's movement/

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: / with an exploitative attitude (*nemnozhko potrebitel'ski*).

The interviewees formulate here a distinction between activism orientated towards socio-political goals versus organization as a commodity and resource. According to them, some women were not interested in social activism *per se*, but rather used *Zhenskii Svet* instrumentally, as a way to gain trips abroad (cf. Hemment 2007). They distance themselves from this exploitative attitude and wish to point out that for them activism in itself was the most important thing. Valentina Ivanovna interpreted this emergence of internal conflicts as a normal process of specialization that happens in social movements. She was afraid that if *Zhenskii Svet* did not specialize and become more professional, a slapdash approach (*profanatsiia*) might result. She gave an example of this slapdash approach caused by the desire to find new forms of employment and livelihood opened up by foreign grants. Some women without any education in social sciences and gender studies started advertising that they would conduct sociological research and offer courses in gender studies, in order to be able to receive grants from foreign donors. Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna wished to disassociate themselves from this kind of activity and emphasized the importance of professionalism and competence in civic activity. These qualities also emerged as key elements of personal and collective identities in the CGS.

On the one hand, the Western contacts that were established during perestroika gave impetus to women's organizations in Tver' (and in Russia in general) and were both materially and spiritually highly important. On the other hand, Western contacts and resources also brought about contradictions that contributed to the dissolution of the women's organizations, networks and solidarities that had developed during perestroika and the early 1990s. However, although this foreign involvement contributed to the

fragmentation of the emerging Russian women's movement, it was far from being the only contributing factor. Differences between the women participating in *Zhenskii Svet* were considerable, and it was difficult to merge the diverging interests that developed in the group. Valentina Ivanovna also saw a positive side to this fragmentation. According to her, "a positive process started when they themselves [the women in *Zhenskii Svet*] grew to realize that they should do what they're interested in". The women gradually became aware of their interests and recognized that not all women share the same interests. This fragmentation can thus be seen as a manifestation of a new opportunity to publicly articulate and organize around interests, contributing to the pluralization of voices in the public sphere. In this sense it can be seen as a counter-reaction to Soviet organizational culture.

As the crisis in *Zhenskii Svet* became more protracted, Valentina Ivanovna decided to opt out of the group and started to meet with like-minded *Zhenskii Svet* activists in another place. This marked the gradual dissolution of *Zhenskii Svet*. The part of *Zhenskii Svet* that was led by Valentina Ivanovna eventually divided into two organizations with their own profiles and interests. Unlike *Zhenskii Svet*, they officially registered and actively started to seek grants from donor agencies. A women's crisis center, *Gortenziia*, was established in order to combat violence against women (see Hemment 2007). The crisis center received premises, a telephone and funds for salaries for four employees from the local authorities. The second organization to be established was the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies. Valentina Ivanovna was the main instigator of this project and became the leader of this center.

The CGS: civic organization and educational unit

The CGS is a feminist organization that specializes in education, research and publishing in gender studies. It can be seen as an epistemic community producing knowledge based on its viewpoint (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). Unlike *Zhenskii Svet*, the CGS is not a women's group as such, although it advocates women's rights and aims at emancipation. Both men and women participate in it and its main target group is students, both male and female. Hence the mobilizing identity in the CGS is that of a 'feminist' (scholar), an identity category that can be occupied by both women and men.

The CGS has a dual institutional status as a civic organization and as an educational unit incorporated into Tver′ State University.[8] Valentina Ivanovna explained that just as it was important for the crisis center *Gortenziia* to get the city to participate in the project, it was equally important for the CGS to involve the university in its activities. She describes this as a "strategy of involvement" (*strategiia vovlecheniia*) aimed at strengthening the CGS's sustainability by combining both governmental and non-governmental sources. However, when all civic organizations had to re-register during 1999–2002 (Dzhibladze 2005, 188), the CGS did not do that and continued

its work as an informal organization. The group did not see registration as necessary, because it applied for foreign grants from within the university structure and could in this way avoid paying taxes and other forms of state control over its activities.[9] Thus, the group developed a novel institutional form in order to maximize its opportunities. The university offers the Center a useful 'roof' that, according to CGS members, increases its credibility in the eyes of donors. The university also offers the Center resources, such as free premises, and in this way provides a certain security: even if foreign grants ceased, the university would still provide the basic infrastructure.

The CGS has a stable core group of members comprising about fifteen university teachers representing the social sciences and humanities. The absolute majority of them are women; there are only three men in the core group, all of them spouses of the women activists. The members' ages vary between 28 and 55 years. The core group of the CGS includes, in addition to Valentina Ivanovna, her husband, Pavel Denisovich, who participates as a volunteer in charge of technology. He is not as such interested in gender studies but is rather involved in the role of a spouse.[10] There are also two other married couples in the core group. Sofiia Vladimirovna is Valentina Ivanovna's student and was one of the activists in *Zhenskii Svet*. She has also brought her husband, Vadim Petrovich, with her to the activities of the CGS, and he is nowadays one of its most active participants. The other couple is Boris Antonovich and Ekaterina Nikolaevna, both Valentina Ivanovna's colleagues at the State University. Until 2003, an old friend of Valentina Ivanovna, Raisa Borisovna, worked as a manager of the CGS, mainly taking care of the CGS's public relations. The CGS's library is managed by Lidiia Maksimovna, who is a former student of Valentina Ivanovna. The other members of the core group include Valentina Ivanovna's former students and colleagues, most notably Viktoriia Ivanovna, Marina Grigorievna and Larisa Aleksandrovna. None of the CGS's core group members belong to any political party, but four of them periodically participate in other civic organizations.

The CGS occupies three rooms next to the Department of Sociology and Political Science at Tver′ State University. The library is housed in one of the rooms and it is regularly crowded with students working on projects. In addition, the CGS has a small room next to the library for its publishing activities and, on the third floor, an office where researchers can work at their projects undisturbed. However, CGS members gather at Valentina Ivanovna's home more often than on their university premises. Her living room is the place where the core group frequently gathers to sip coffee or wine and to have a conversation, reminiscent of the 'kitchen politics' of late socialism. During my fieldwork, the majority of the organization's meetings took place at Valentina Ivanovna's home, especially after Valentina Ivanovna fell ill in 2002 and was confined to her home for a long time. As Viktoriia Ivanovna noted: "Well, Valentina Ivanovna of course runs the

CGS in a way from her so-called headquarters-apartment (*shtab-kvartira*), from home."

As was argued in Chapter 2, civic activity is a field dominated by the educated class. The CGS is a good example of this as it can be characterized as an intelligentsia group. CGS members have benefited from the social change of the 1990s in the sense that they are now able to pursue intellectual activities that were not allowed in the Soviet system. They have been able to maintain and accumulate their cultural capital with the help of foreign donors, offering them access to various training programs. They have also been able to convert this cultural capital into economic capital with the grants from foreign donors. These grants have provided them with significantly better salaries than those of their colleagues at the university and, in addition, they have access to various benefits in kind, such as computers and trips abroad. The CGS has thus given impoverished university staff the opportunity to continue to work in academia and find a supplementary livelihood. Viktoriia Ivanovna referred to this point when she explained why many young scholars are interested in gender studies: it is difficult to conduct other kinds of scientific work given the absence of resources.[11] This support from international donors has also brought the CGS symbolic capital in the local community, in the form of prestige and authority in the eyes of the university and local administration.[12]

In search of a new subject: the aims of the CGS

The CGS's goals can be divided into *immediate* and *long-term* goals. The immediate goals include supporting people engaged in gender studies; disseminating and popularizing feminism, gender studies and the women's movement; highlighting women's problems in society; and providing intellectual resources and encouragement to women's organizations. As Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna argued, theoretical knowledge "may help people to organize with a more thorough understanding around their interests".

Theoretical knowledge, professionalism and expertise are considered as important building blocks of personal and collective identity in the CGS. This professional and expert identity is constructed, in particular, in contrast to the 'slapdash approach' of some other organizations, a theme that came up in the context of *Zhenskii Svet*. The significance of theory is not surprising since the CGS is defined first and foremost as a scientific and education organization. The CGS's members also portray professionalism as a key to donor support. As Valentina Ivanovna pointed out, "Many people become disappointed as soon as they start writing applications for grants and don't get any. (…) The foundations **pay specialists**, see my point! Most people are unaware of this; one really needs to know what foundations are about, what they allocate money for." Professionalism is defined in the group as a necessary feature of civic activity and amateurishness as a

threat to organizational activity. Western donor agencies have encouraged professionalization (Richter 2002) and have seen the low level of expertise in Russian civic organizations as a major problem (Zdravomyslova 2005). However, the emphasis on theoretical knowledge and special skills can potentially be exclusionary, since people without theoretical or academic expertise cannot participate. Schild (1998, 106) has noted in the context of Chilean women's organizations that demands for professionalization can act to exclude working-class women, thus highlighting the role of social class in civic activity.

The prognostic identity frame – the definition of a desirable future – emerges in relation to the CGS's long-term goals. The CGS is portrayed as aiming at emancipation through education and enlightenment (*prosveshenie*). This emancipation is crucially connected with the aim of transforming people's worldviews and attitudes. Valentina Ivanovna defined education as the most effective way to bring about social change: "I perfectly understand that education is the slowest way to bring about emancipation, but so far education is the most effective way (…) and the cheapest one, strange as it may seem. (…) Because enthusiasm plays a great role here."

The CGS aims at the emancipation of both men and women and that is why it does not want to limit its membership and activities only to women. This view arguably derives from the interpretation that men and women were subordinated to the state patriarchy in the USSR (see Voronina 1994; Ashwin 2000; Verdery 1996). Thus, both women and men are perceived to be in need of liberation. The CGS sets itself the task of tearing down stereotypes that fetter people and introducing new concepts that help to articulate gender relations from a different perspective.

RAISA BORISOVNA: The way of thinking needs to be changed. The contents of our heads need to be changed. Some 'nails' need to be taken out of our heads, because they are a hindrance. By nails I mean stereotypes. (…) That is, to free our worldviews from many-many-centuries-long stereotypes. That's first. Second: pose social issues the way they should be posed, basically. Generally, give a definition of gender inequality (*gendernoe neravenstvo*).

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: In my opinion, (…) the Gender Center does, to a certain degree, moral education work (*vospitatel'naia rabota*), [though] perhaps not in the direction envisaged by the state. We help [students] to comprehend things [that are] believed to be stereotypical and traditional. I can, for instance, show how my own view of society evolved. When I started working with Valentina Ivanovna in 1997, my views on gender were quite traditional. But through working in the Center, reading the literature, I could simply rank my priorities somewhat differently, really understand this constructed pattern, all those corporeal practices, cultural norms, and so forth. So I think the Gender Center

(…) removes many girls' rose-coloured spectacles (…) we explain to them what they are in for. This has to do exactly with a person's reorientation, a change in worldview. This is very profound work. It aims to really change a person's values.

At the beginning of her quote Ekaterina Nikolaevna articulates a subversive position for the CGS: it is responsible for the moral education of youth, but its agenda differs from the governmental one. Both Raisa Borisovna and Ekaterina Nikolaevna define the goal of the CGS as offering new perspectives and destabilizing traditional assumptions and stereotypes. Ekaterina Nikolaevna gives an example of her own identity transformation: before starting to work with Valentina Ivanovna, she had "quite traditional views on gender". She also points out how the constructivist approach has offered her a new framework for making sense of gender.

This emancipation and transformation of the people's worldview is linked with the CGS's goal of the 'perestroika of a person', constructing a new citizen-subject and new patterns of citizenship. Constructing this new subject is explicitly a gendered project: it is about imagining new ways of organizing gender relations in society. The distinction between the 'West' and 'East/Soviet' runs as a meta-narrative in the collective identity construction of the CGS. The West operates as a central point of identification, whereas the Soviet past is seen as a negative legacy from which the group wishes to distance itself. The articulation of a new subject in the CGS simultaneously entails a redefinition of 'us' as a national collectivity: discourses of national identity and the identity of the CGS are interwoven. The Soviet past is viewed as something that constantly threatens to thwart the transformation of Russian society into a democratic state. CGS members approach the social transformation of the 1990s from the individual perspective. Systemic, structural changes are interpreted as coming about via individual-level changes; that is why education is so crucial for the activities of the CGS.[13]

The diagnosis CGS activists make is that the Soviet system victimized and paralyzed people, depriving them of the capacity for agency. The social transformation of the 1990s has entailed a process of social and individual liberation from this system. People have to be re-educated to adapt to new circumstances and in order for a democratic regime to develop in Russia. CGS activists portray social change as the transformation of passive, state-dependent objects into active and enterprising citizens. Russians are interpreted as still being in the process of becoming; they are not yet subjects but they are no longer mere objects of state power. In this 'perestroika of a person', CGS members assign their organization and other civic organizations a key role:

VIKTORIIA IVANOVNA: It [civic activity] promotes (…) public initiative (…). Here most of the population are not able to defend their own rights.

(…) And they get hurt, cheated (…), by the authorities, too. They can't defend their rights, they don't know how to do that (…). Meanwhile, people who do participate in social movements are better informed in a way, can protect themselves at least. Themselves, their family, their near ones, not to mention all other people around them.

The central characteristics of this new subject envisioned in the CGS are initiative, independence (*samostaiatel'nost'*), critical thinking, the ability to stand up for one's rights and to take responsibility (*otvetstvennost'*), and self-organization. Whereas in the Soviet system, the individual's role vis-à-vis the collective was articulated in terms of duty (*dolg*), the CGS's members, by contrast, articulate the relationship between the community and the individual through the concept of responsibility. This is a notable discursive shift entailing a change in the conceptions of citizenship. Instead of an individual's duty towards the state or the state's duty to provide for its citizens, the CGS's members emphasize the individual's responsibility for him/herself and society.[14]

Similar interpretations as in the CGS have also been voiced in other Russian civic organizations. Zdravomyslova (2004, 30–37) has shown how the Soldiers' Mothers Movement presents itself as 'the agent of human rights education', teaching parents (mainly mothers) how to defend themselves and their sons. As in the CGS, the Committee's activists portray Russians as ignorant of their rights and lacking ability in terms of self-help and initiative, and stress the individual's responsibility. The ability of the individual to defend his/her rights is seen as crucial because one cannot expect the state to protect them. Members of a student human rights organization in Tver' also put forward similar views, portraying their organization as educating people to act in a new way:

RESPONDENT 4: We meet with people, [and see that] they're not ready. (…)
RESPONDENT 1: They say: "we can sign it [petition]", but it should be someone else who'd be doing things. (…) Well, they [citizens] are not used to it. I mean, the only form they're used to is writing somewhere, complaining. They don't know other forms yet.
RESPONDENT 4: They've at least learnt to write and complain, it's already inspiring. They've matured enough to do that, at least.
RESPONDENT 3: I think they should learn more. That's the mission (*prizvanie*) of our organization.

CGS members think that Soviet state paternalism and consequently citizens' lack of experience in civic activity has meant that Russians have lost their ability to take the initiative and be independent.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: I've even been asked this kind of question: "Don't I even have to ask for anybody's signature?" (…) Here's the Internet, here're all the papers of the Open Society [Soros Foundation], of the

Ford Foundation and such, and you write by yourselves, and no one is supposed to … issue the permission resolution "Allowed". "Really? Can one do so?" (…) [People think this way] because over seventy years they've grown used to a situation where there's the Party Bureau, and things always require someone's permission. (…). On the other hand, I can understand these people, because when someone has given the permission, it means they don't have any responsibility. And it's a convenient way for many people. "I've permitted you, and now make sure you do everything." Because many are probably quite content with this kind of exploitative attitude (*potrebitel'skoe otnoshenie*). "Oh, the good old times! The Party ordered … " (*laugh*) (…) I feel that for many people in Russia the idea of an open society scares them, because they somehow subconsciously understand – it means responsibility. And one has to be prepared for responsibility, too, right? I'm responsible for my fate, not someone else.

Valentina Ivanovna emphasizes citizens' initiative and independent self-organization at the grassroots level and sees civic organizations as providing an alternative model to Soviet state paternalism. According to her, "if I want to change my life for the better, no one can do that but myself. So, what I do next is to find others with similar problems. And that's when we can coordinate our activities and fight for justice concertedly. It's easier to handle these problems together, not all alone." This importance of collective self-help is underpinned by the idea that one cannot – and should not – wait for anything from the state, but rather try to solve problems by creating horizontal ties. As Valentina Ivanovna stated in one of her interviews, "I think the situation is such that citizens don't really expect anything good from the authorities. It may be good because they start [channelling] their energy to another direction."

   This type of paternalism discourse[15] that emerges in the CGS is culturally powerful and has been widely circulated among the Russian intelligentsia in the ways it has imagined and represented 'the people' and evaluated the Soviet era. It has also been drawn on in the West, in academic and everyday discourse alike, as an explanatory framework for Russia's development (see, e.g., Pipes 1974). Due to the Soviet paternalistic system, Valentina Ivanovna interprets donor funding as having potentially detrimental implications for civic organizations. In her view, donor funding tends to reproduce paternalistic arrangements. If in Soviet society people relied upon the Party-state, now they have started to rely upon donors for help and support, which hinders the development of independent activism. Valentina Ivanovna portrays this process as a disturbing shift from one form of paternalism and patriarchy to another:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: That was another awful thing for me, when I suddenly
   started realizing that (…) it's like it used to be with the CPSU: one

relied upon it, on the state, and now all hopes are placed on foundations. And since there has been no experience of independent activities, (…) it's very dangerous for Russia. Because we've left one master for another one (*ot odnogo bat'ki ushli – i k drugomu*). (…) When foundations entered Russia, temptation appeared. When there's no money, and salaries are not paid (…) – and here are foundations giving grants. (…) People urgently establish an organization [in order to] apply for a grant. (…) It's not the right way to found a civic organization. But it's also bad for another reason – we've just started to lose the habit of being dependants. (…) when the Party is supposed to take decisions for me, the state dresses, feeds, teaches me. (…) But now the state is gone, the state has practically refused to provide support. There's no such all-embracing party anymore. And it was then, when there was no (…) experience of self-organization, of activism (…) that the foundations appeared.

In the CGS, youth is signified as the hope for the future and as an agent of social change, which partly explains why the CGS has chosen to focus on students in its activities. The emergence of a 'new generation' is seen as important because it is a precondition for the development of civil society in Russia and serves as a guarantee that totalitarianism will not return. However, although CGS activists represent the younger generation as an engine of social change, many of them pointed out that it is the elder generation that is socially and politically active. They saw the elder generation as participating out of habit or simply because they cannot live in any other way. At first glance, there seems to be a contradiction in the CGS in these representations of generation and activism. On the one hand, CGS activists represent the Soviet generation as passive object of state policies, but on the other hand, they also portray it as an active participant in current organizations. This same contradiction also emerged in the Legal Aid Clinic (LAC) in Tver′ that offers free legal consultation to indigent people. In their interviews, the student-lawyers working in the Clinic told me about elderly women clients they called 'granny activists' (*babushki aktivistki*). These activists were legally competent clients and persistent in defending their rights. The student-lawyers portrayed these activists as somewhat ridiculous and naïve, because they were still trying to get something out of the state. In their opinion this was simply a waste of time.[16]

Thus, the elder generation is represented both as passive and paternalistic and as an active participant in civic organizations. This ambivalence can be explained by the fact that CGS and LAC activists conceive of the activism of this elder generation as a *wrong kind of activism*. The elder generation is perceived as orienting its activity towards the state, which is perceived as futile. The activists emphasize individual agency and responsibility and think that it is pointless to expect anything from the state; self-organization and self-help are regarded as being much more fruitful. Their organizations orient themselves to fellow-citizens and the local community rather than the state.

Means to an end: activities of the CGS

Repertoire of activity is an important element in the construction of collective identity. Ann Swidler (1986) has pointed out in her seminal essay that culture influences action by shaping a repertoire or 'tool kit' of habits, skills, symbols and rituals from which people construct strategies of action. These strategies depend on the available set of cultural resources. In the CGS, the activists choose forms of activity in relation to the Soviet past and organizational culture; longer traditions of collective action in Russian history; and the Western models of organization that have become available. CGS members, because they wish to disassociate themselves from Soviet organizational culture, shun demonstrations, parades and presidiums. The Center deliberately wishes to work in a different way from Soviet 'transmission belts' and the Communist Party. It aims at more democratic and non-hierarchical communication and has an aversion to formal structures. The CGS connects itself with Soviet informal public activities, which is manifested in the habit of gathering in Valentina Ivanovna's living room and in the fact that the group is built upon family, friendship and collegial relationships. The CGS has also been influenced by the repertoires of activity of Western social movements, in particular feminist organizations. For example, the emphasis on non-hierarchical organization and the attempt to avoid bureaucratization are reminiscent of Western feminist groups of the 1970s (Polletta and Jasper 2001, 297).

The CGS has three main forms of activity: education, research and publishing. These activities are linked with the CGS's goals presented above. Education is the oldest and the most important form of activity. The CGS draws on the old tradition of Russian intelligentsia in seeing education of the people as a way to engender social change. The CGS offers courses in gender studies through a wide range of disciplines and organizes an open-enrolment evening school. The evening school, although open for everyone, is almost exclusively attended by university students. It has been very popular ever since it started in 1999. It has provided a much-needed inter-subjective space for students (and also occasionally for other social groups) to reflect on their experiences and identities. The gender order has been in flux after the socialist period, and the evening school offers a forum where this process can be addressed. It appears that not all young people attending the evening school are necessarily interested in feminism or gender studies, but rather they come to the evening school also because of its open, interpersonal character. However, during the courses students often develop an interest in gender studies and become more conscious of how social reality is gendered. The CGS also challenges Soviet-style teaching methods in its courses. Students are encouraged to pose questions and discuss. Spatial arrangements are used in order to destabilize teaching conventions: tables are frequently organized into a circle, in order to make the teaching situation more democratic and less hierarchical.

The CGS functions as a locus of alternative, potentially subversive discourses and social practices pertaining to gender relations. The CGS represents a place where, to paraphrase de Lauretis (1987, 25),

> the terms of a different construction of gender can be posed – terms that do have effect and take hold at the level of subjectivity and self-representation: in the micropolitical practices of daily life and daily resistances that afford both agency and sources of power or empowering investments.

As was discussed in Chapter 3, public discourses surrounding gender in Russia tend to be essentialist, and the CGS can in its activities destabilize these discourses and offer new ways to understand gender relations. The CGS can be seen as a 'subaltern counterpublic' (Fraser 1997, 81) that provides spaces of discursive contestation both for teachers and students, and as a social arena in which a feminist worldview and solidarity may be engendered. It is a site where students and teachers can invent and circulate oppositional interpretations of identities and interests.

When studying sites and strategies of resistance and social change it is essential to direct attention to hidden sites that conventionally fall out of the 'social movement' scope. As Mirza and Reay (2000, 525) write in the British social movement context, "in this masculinised discourse of race and social change, what becomes publicly acknowledged as new social movements are those collectivities in which action and agency are highly *visible* and always accompanied by *overt acts* for clamour and recognition" (emphasis mine). By focusing upon studying only publicly visible and overtly contentious collective action, we can miss equally subversive but more covert and publicly less visible action – for example, the activities in which the CGS is engaged.

In addition to education, the CGS is also engaged in research. It carries out research projects and organizes seminars and conferences. Of the CGS's recent research projects, the most important has been the project addressing the integration of a gender perspective into university curricula and the analysis of university textbooks in social sciences and humanities from a gender perspective.[17] The third orientation in the CGS's work has to do with publishing. This is the most recent orientation as the Center established 'Feminist Press' in 2003.[18] The realization of this project resulted from a visit that Valentina Ivanovna paid to the United States in 2002 during which she familiarized herself with Feminist Press there. Feminist Press was founded in Tver′ in order to publish forgotten feminist and pro-emancipation texts from the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. In this sense, the CGS engages in a project of rediscovering and rewriting the history (or more properly, 'herstory') of feminism and the women's movement in Russia. In connection with this, it also seeks to remove misinterpretations concerning feminism. The fact that the history of

Russian feminism was suppressed in the Soviet Union has contributed to the perception of feminism as something alien and a Western 'import' in contemporary Russia (Bull *et al.* 2000, 6).

The CGS also has a fourth sphere of activity, namely contacts with the public (*obshchestvennost'*), the local community. This has been the weakest component in its activities so far, as the work is primarily targeted at the university and students. However, unlike most civic organizations in Tver', the CGS does cultivate more horizontal relationships with civic groups than vertical ones with the authorities. The CGS does not so much aim at recruiting new *members* to the Center, but rather new *participants* to its courses. The Center disseminates information about its activities first and foremost at universities; other groups of citizens receive much less information. In addition to advertising at the university, personal networks were mentioned as a way to disseminate information about the CGS and attract new participants:

VIKTORIIA IVANOVNA: I went, by chance, to have my nails tended. (…) So I told her [the parlour owner], for example, about our Center, that it offers classes on gender issues, and that anyone can visit it freely. Well, I'm not saying she's going to rush there straight away, but still, it's my explanations that might get her interested. Or, also, Valentina Ivanovna was once buying sausages. (…) She said [to the shop assistants] that there's our Center, and you come along. And these ladies waited for the classes to start and I think they visited the classes. I think it's personal contacts (*lichnye kontakty*) that are the best way of all, in general [to attract new participants]. And (…) we, being women, go to fashion houses to order something, to hairdressers to have our hair cut, and so on. It's mainly women who serve clients there.

This quote is interesting in terms of the gender-specific social spaces it highlights. Hair and beauty salons functioned as an important informal public sphere in the Soviet Union providing information, advice and help for women, and gave them a much-needed breathing space amidst all their chores (Azhgikhina and Goscilo 1998). Thus, both during the Soviet era and today these women-specific milieus can operate as crucial arenas of creation and mobilization of networks and dissemination of information.

Whether to increase community outreach or not depends on the definitions of collective identity, that is, on 'who we are'. In a way reminiscent of *Zhenskii Svet*, the dividing line on this issue in the CGS is whether to orient activities towards a more 'everyday' and 'practical' direction, or to further develop a scientific expert organization. This distinction, however, is more a difference of emphasis rather than a fundamental rift in terms of goals. No one is willing to give up the scientific component, but some would like to strengthen the practical aspect. Marina Grigorievna, for example, said she would like the Center to be more closely connected with the townspeople,

"so that things that are now of interest only to a limited number of specialists, would affect most people". Larisa Aleksandrovna was also eager to engage in practical activism:

> I'm not ready to limit myself to research and creative activities, text analysis, but would like to go over to a new, real-life level, a practical one. [Dealing with] specific people, specific problems and bring these problems to light. (…) So I'm now moving out of the theoretical stream into a more practical, anthropological one.

She also voiced a concern that Russian feminist groups, including the CGS, are heavily dependent on Western donors. According to her, if Western money was withdrawn, Russian feminism would collapse. I think that Larisa Aleksandrovna saw practical work in the CGS as a way to create a domestic base for its activities and in this way to decrease dependency on the West. By contrast, some other CGS activists, such as Boris Antonovich, were keen to develop the scientific profile of the group. He envisaged the CGS as an expert and educational organization that works with students, schoolteachers and social workers and provides expert assessment of legislation.

The media is an important channel through which civic groups can try to make their activities known and their message heard in society. CGS members perceived co-operation with media as important in order to raise awareness of gender-related problems in society and the group has tried to collaborate with media quite actively, but not always successfully.[19] In contrast, many CGS members, as well as a number of other civic activists in Tver′, considered public protests as ineffective and even ridiculous. Raisa Borisovna commented as follows: "One may, of course, go to a demonstration. But they'll say: 'These crazy women have gone mad. They have nothing to do.'" No one in the CGS voiced an interest in contentious action. In this sense, the CGS's repertoire of action mirrors that of the Russian women's movement, in general, which has focused upon education, research and information campaigns instead of contentious action vis-à-vis the state (Sperling 1999).

The CGS's willingness to break away from Soviet organization culture also manifests itself in the fact that CGS members emphasize the voluntary nature of civic participation. They do not articulate political citizenship as an *obligation* but rather as an *opportunity*, thus departing from the Soviet model of obligatory societal activity. The bleak economic conditions were, however, perceived as impeding participation in civic organizations:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: The problem (…) is that people have been left with virtually no salary (…). So people constantly have to take up several jobs at a time. (…) This means [people have time] neither for private life, nor for social [life] … On the one hand, it's certainly needed, this

community, sociability. (…) On the other hand, however, because people have to work all the time for subsistence, they lose this part of their life, the societal (*obshchestvennaia*), civic (*grazhdanskaia*) life.

Ekaterina Nikolaevna also commented in her interview that as the economic situation is very strenuous, "the choice has to be made at the level of virtually every individual family – whether to work for money or work as a volunteer in a civic organization". This construes civic activity as a privilege, as something that few lucky people can afford themselves (cf. Chapter 3). CGS activists felt that if people had more free time and were not constantly preoccupied with survival, the participation rate in civic organizations would be higher. Thus, lack of time and economic capital were seen as centrally inhibiting the exercise of political citizenship.

Open and civil society

The self-identity frame of the CGS consists of four dimensions: civil and open society; feminism; identifications and disidentifications with other women's groups; and teamwork and its tensions with leader-centeredness. I have identified these dimensions as central components of collective identity on the basis of the interviews and observation of the group. Obviously I as a researcher also participated in this identity formation. The interaction during the interviews and my participation in the group affected what dimensions of collective identity were represented and activated.

CGS activists, when talking about the CGS and civic activity in general, most often employed two terms: civic organization (*obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*) and civic activity (*obshchestvennaia deiatel'nost'*). In addition, the CGS was also associated with the women's movement (*zhenskoe dvizhenie*). Civic organization was used as a neutral term by all but Pavel Denisovich, for whom the concept evoked negative feelings. In his mind, participation in civic organizations signified societal work (*obshchestvennaia rabota*), and he associated both terms with Soviet organizations and his unpleasant experiences in them.[20]

I asked all CGS activists about their views concerning civil society (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*) and how, in their view, it is related to contemporary Russian society. I was interested in finding out what kinds of meanings and associations this term triggered in them and how they understood it. In their understanding of this term, the utopian, normative and ideal dimension of civil society emerged clearly. As one of the activists put it, "civil society is the ideal to strive for. No ideal can, in principle, exist in nature. It is a horizon. The closer you get to the horizon, the farther away it is. I think civil society doesn't exist [fully] anywhere." For all CGS activists, civil society was something that either did not exist or was just about to emerge in Russia during 2001–2, whereas in 2004, they thought that the development of civil society was under threat.

Western liberal democracy and civil society operate as important frameworks for the CGS's self-understanding. The civil society discourse that emerges in the group is reminiscent of what Pursiainen (2004) has called a 'romantic-liberal *zapadnik*' discourse, based on the idea of participatory, Western-style civil society and democracy. This participatory civil society has been especially dear to many dissidents and democratically oriented activists in Russia. Some CGS activists spontaneously employed the concept of civil society in articulating the activities of the CGS, while others did not employ it spontaneously, but used it as a notion onto which they could project desires and aspirations. The concept of civil society was evoked in order to renegotiate relationships between the individual and the collective and to envision ideal citizenship based on a responsive state and an active and responsible citizenry. Civic organizations were often defined as the core of civil society.

For Valentina Ivanovna, the concept of civil society is highly important and she made several references to it in her interviews. When she explained why she had wanted to establish the CGS in the first place, she said that "for me, gender education is part of civic education. (…) everything related to civil society, the notion of an open society (*otkrytoe obshchestvo*), is of real concern to me". CGS members articulated their activity by drawing on a political ontology that resembles Western liberalism, in which the basic unit of activity is the individual (Pulkkinen 1998). However, this liberal ontology intertwines with Russian discourses of communality. This combination can be read as a way of distancing the CGS from the Soviet system that was permeated by Marxist political ontology. Valentina Ivanovna argued that there have always been the roots of civil society in Russia – domestic traditions of communality and organization – but only now can they begin to develop again. She linked civil society to such notions as societal life, the commune and collectivism, and a term community (*kom′iuniti*) adopted from English:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: It [Russian civil society] is different, because in Western societies, as far as I know (…), civil society is already a part of societal life (*obshchestvennaia zhizn′*) that needn't be explained. People know that in addition to the state, there's the community (*kom′iuniti*). The notion of the community is essential. (…) There's the commune (*obshchina*) (…), "one for all and all for one!"[21] (…) this elemental collectivism! (…) we didn't have this experience, it was killed initially, in the early 1920s. Now the first sprouts of civil society have emerged, mass organizations and such. People had certainly become intimidated over the last seventy years, right? So now, step by step, we're reviving this capacity for self-organization.

Civil society is here represented as a new type of collective that builds upon respect for individuality. Valentina Ivanovna also links civil society with generation by construing youth as 'builders of civil society':

These kids have had the time to see a lot, to compare, to feel this rapture of doing something all by themselves. These boys and girls have no other choice but to build civil society, where people can learn to live together without losing their individuality. This will also be collectivism, but a grassroots one.

Valentina Ivanovna presents civil society as an embodiment of collectivism, but as antithetical to Soviet collectivism in the sense that it builds on personal freedom and individuality and is created from below.[22]

During fieldwork I could clearly see how CGS members' views concerning Russia's political and civil society development turned from optimism to pessimism. In 2001, I heard many optimistic accounts about the prospects of civic activity in Russia. In 2002, the views were already somewhat spiritless, but a notable difference was evident in 2004, when activists were overtly pessimistic and critical. Ekaterina Nikolaevna stated in her interview in 2004 that "today the CGS is a kind of a small true civil society institute (*institut grazhdanskogo obshchestva*) for me". She presented the CGS as a kind of sanctuary in a political climate in which she saw all the seeds of civil society, democracy and freedom as being under threat. She watched sociopolitical developments in Russia with pessimism and disappointment:

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: [Civil society will not develop] in the near future. Not even in the coming hundred, two hundred years. I think some sort of micro civil societies will exist at the level of individual large cities. (…) In the countryside, among very poor people, I don't think civil society will take root. Everyone will be sitting in their own houses, behind safely locked doors, behind iron bars. (…) powerful civic organizations here, those that fight against drugs, even they can't really do anything, because it's all about big money and the state authorities are closely interlocked with this, about corruption. So it'll be this kind of nominal civil society.

Regional differences and social stratification are interpreted as meaning that the country will be divided so that 'micro civil societies' will develop in big cities that have a more favourable and economically secure position, while in the poverty-ridden countryside hardly any elements of civil society will emerge. The lack of security and trust in society – people entrenched in their apartments behind iron bars – and widespread corruption that goes up to the highest echelons of power are seen as leaving very little room for independent civic activity.

In 2004, when I interviewed Valentina Ivanovna and Vadim Petrovich, a CGS member in his thirties, the concepts of civil society and open society had gained more political significance. An adherence to these concepts marked resistance vis-à-vis the current political regime, which, according to the interviewees, had reintroduced a Soviet atmosphere (*sovetskii dukh*) and

authoritarian patterns. One can read negotiation of the meanings of civil society in the interview: the interviewees react to the ways in which the Putin administration has begun to redefine the concept for its own purposes.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: I'm a pessimist in this sense. Concerning future progress with civil society. When even those embryos [of civil society] have been crushed down (…).

VADIM PETROVICH: They [the authorities] maintain the rhetoric, at least. /

SUVI: / So it remains only at that level?/

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: / That's what's really annoying. The rhetoric.

VADIM PETROVICH: I think it should be used. While we can, we should make use of it. (…) While they at least speak about it, one should try to force something out of them, where possible. (…)

SUVI: Right after the elections Putin said that it is necessary to strengthen [civil society]/

VADIM PETROVICH: / First words. (…) (*all talking simultaneously*) But still, one can make references to that when appealing [the authorities]. (…) the thing is that I often repeat Putin's saying. I give the course on civil society here (…). I establish a distance from the beginning, showing that Putin in the very first minutes upon election said that we would strengthen civil society. So I say: "The authorities keep playing with this concept. It means there's something about it that can be useful."

Vadim Petrovich sees it as a positive sign that at least the *rhetoric* of civil society has remained – although otherwise the Russian state has done much to weed out the seeds of civil society that had begun to develop in the 1990s. He proposes that the CGS should try to use this rhetoric for its own purposes, while it is still available. The interviewees distance themselves from the ways the political elite (ab)uses the concept of civil society. The way they employ the concept of civil society can be understood as a tactical action in the spirit of de Certeau (1984): they use the tools on offer – the notion of civil society – but to other purposes than those envisioned by the powers-that-be. In the same interview Valentina Ivanovna also contemplated the institutionalization of the CGS's activities as a strategy to engage in the struggle for a civil society. The metaphor of a 'play' indicates the tactical nature of action:

> I want to use my opportunities to institutionalize the Center, as much as possible. Strange as it may seem, I have an anarchist spirit (*anarkhistka po dukhu*), and generally speaking, I'm against any kind of organization, but for our activities to be useful, to contribute somehow to the revival of civil society, we'll have to play along for a while and institutionalize our activities.

Although most CGS activists were rather optimistic about the prospects for civil society in 2001, Boris Antonovich was an exception. He was already

then predicting that socio-political development in Russia would fail to sustain the preconditions for civil society:

BORIS ANTONOVICH: There is little difference between the Communist rule and the present-day one, (…) and people living in Russia have lost the habit of taking decisions for themselves and of standing up for their positions. They are easily manipulated and the authorities are very skilled at taking advantage of this. Unfortunately, there are only very few people who are capable of defending their views (…). The rest are being manipulated. (…) I don't think it [the development of civil society] is going to happen in the coming twenty–thirty years. A generation must change, or maybe two. And that if everything goes normally. But it looks very much like we are heading for a very abnormal course of events. (…) It's most likely that they [civic organizations] will be … transformed. They'll keep working, but within the power discourse set by the current authorities. (…) It seems, there's slow and veiled work going on towards their … how to put it mildly? … (*laughing*) Well, let's say, their castration, in fact. (…) Thus, the very possibility to say something that would disturb the existing authorities is eliminated. In fact, this process is underway, it's obvious to me. It proceeds slowly, but then again, they are not in a hurry.

The Soviet and post-Soviet states are portrayed as having engendered a citizenry that is easily manipulated and unable to make independent decisions and defend its views.[23] A generational change is proposed as a partial cure to the situation, but not even this may help, because the political development in the country is seen as blocking rather than facilitating civil society development. According to Boris Antonovich, the power structures increasingly reduce discursive space and attempt to make civic organizations toothless, and unable to criticize the powers-that-be.

The concepts of the third sector (*tretii sektor*) and social partnership (*sotsial'noe partnerstvo*) began to circulate more widely in the Russian civic sector in the mid-1990s (see Chapter 6). However, these concepts emerged only once in my interviews with CGS members, which indicates that they do not have much relevance for the group.[24] In a way it is surprising, since the Western donors with whom the CGS has co-operated have been particularly active in introducing the concept of the third sector to Russia (Hemment 2004a). Valentina Ivanovna wished to make a clear distinction between the third sector and civil society:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: Regrettably, over the past few years in Russia there has been less talk about civil society. When perestroika began, notions of the law-governed state (*pravovoe gosudarstvo*), civil society were introduced. (…) Then all that began to vanish somehow. One started to talk about the verticals of power (*vertikali vlasti*). Just for that reason

alone, I'd like to resume the seminar for students devoted to civil society, because I think it's little discussed in Russia. Or one tries to reduce the concept of civil society to the concept of the third sector. (…) The third sector means grants, foundations – which is different. (…) Civil society is far broader, not just the third sector, not only activities related to fund-raising for one's projects. [It means] people's capacity for self-organization. When people can organize themselves without any order from the top.

Valentina Ivanovna distinguishes between civil society, denoting the citizens' capacity for grassroots self-organization, and the third sector, referring to the activities of foundations and grants. She links the concept of civil society to the concept of the law-governed state, which was typical of the democracy discourse during perestroika (Zdravomyslova 1996, 22). She detects a shift in discourses: in twenty-first century Russia, the concepts 'verticals of power'[25] and 'the third sector' have begun to dominate the concept of civil society. The quote also reveals how education is regarded as a strategy of resistance: Valentina Ivanovna wants to resume her course on civil society, precisely because civil society is losing its currency in the current political climate.

According to my interpretation, civil society operates in the CGS as a notion with which the members can distance themselves both from the Soviet past and the current political regime, which, in their view, increasingly resembles the Soviet one. The CGS is represented as an embodiment of civil society. Civil society is also a tactical tool that can be harnessed for resistance vis-à-vis the current powers that be. This calls into question those interpretations that suggest that Western-based concepts, such as civil society, are forcefully imported to Russia and that they are meaningless for local activists who at best can instrumentally employ them in order to gain donor funding. Civil society can have its emancipatory dimension; it is a discourse with which actors can envisage new ways to organize social relations.

Feminism: a stigmatized and liberating identity

Feminist (scholar) is a shared identity for CGS members. The CGS is not a radical feminist organization (in a Western sense), but it can rather be seen as a reformist organization that strives to change the prevailing gender system through the means of education. The Center also has an integration-oriented approach rather than a separatist one vis-à-vis society: it strives to improve women's life in society by seeking collaboration with the state university and local and regional authorities.

The collective identity of a feminist is constructed in the negotiation between the public discourses and the interpretations of feminism that the group itself produces. According to CGS activists, feminism carries a negative label and is generally viewed with great suspicion in Russia. Feminism is

linked with discredited Soviet equality policies and seen as something alien, dangerously Western and unsuitable for Russia (Sperling 1999; Savkina 2002). CGS members interpreted distrust towards feminists as deriving from Russian history, which has made women activists avoid identifying themselves with feminism. As Marina Grigorievna pointed out,

> I think feminism has been a kind of swear word here ever since the nineteenth century, so our feminists even tended to call themselves 'equal-righters' (*ravnopravki*), rather than feminists. This is still the attitude today. Well, who are the feminists? They are people who have failed in their private lives, people who feel sore, people with some defects.

Larisa Aleksandrovna, for her part, commented that feminism is "normally associated with a woman who resembles, you know, a red proletarian (*krasnyi proletarii*). A woman who doesn't care that much for her family, who is obsessed with her career and opposes herself to man." According to CGS activists, feminism is most of all perceived as a threat to the *family*. The line of thinking goes that the family is the basic structure of society, and if the family is under threat, so is the whole existence of Russia.[26] According to one CGS member, some university professors see the Center as "blurring the minds of youth and distracting them from correct solutions in family life". These negative views on feminism limit the CGS's opportunities for collective action and attempts to integrate feminist views into society. The ability to impose negative and stigmatized definitions of the identity of a group constitutes, as della Porta and Diani (1999) note, a fundamental mechanism of social domination.

There is not a uniform understanding of feminism among CGS members. One can find elements of liberal equality, gynocentric and postmodern feminisms in the group. It is, however, possible to identify certain feminist principles that all CGS members share. They all see women to be in a subordinated position in society and seek to change this. Feminism is defined in the group to be about the redefinition of gender relations, self-respect and the struggle for women's rights, and against discrimination against women and gender-based violence. CGS members question the traditional gender division of labor in the family and the seemingly automatic equation of womanhood with motherhood. Important concepts for making sense of gender relations in the Center, with which it aims at making visible women's and men's experiences and positions in society, are 'gender equity' (*gendernoe ravenstvo*) and 'gender approach/aspect' (*gendernyi podkhod/aspekt*).[27] By contrast, CGS members do not use Soviet discourses of the 'woman question' (*zhenskii vopros*) and 'equality' (*ravnopravie*) when they articulate gender relations in contemporary Russia.[28]

CGS members think that feminism and the CGS's activities are seen in Russia as irrelevant and detached from reality, on the one hand, and dan-

gerous, subversive and radical, on the other. The CGS is regarded as posing a threat to the most fundamental issue for people – their sex (*pol*). At the same time, feminists are seen as puttering around with trivial things when there are really 'important' questions that would need to be solved.

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: The main problem, according to the adherents of our 'anti-gender party' (…) is that they [gender relations] are not the biggest problem in Russia today. [It is said] that the situation is critical, [we have a declining] birth rate, destitution, and you [the CGS] talk about minor problems. Moreover, when we [the CGS] suggest considering gender as a certain construct, they start screaming: won't you leave at least this alone. That is, all our values have been ruined, and you speak of taking 'sex' (*pol*) away from people. (…) In many people's opinion we idle away our time (*prazdnoe vremiapreprovozhdenie*).

Practitioners and researchers alike have criticized women's organizations for being too isolated from the populace and claim that there tends to be an increasing gap between organizations and their constituencies (see e.g. Sundstrom 2002; Richter 2002). Elitism, marginalization and isolation are also issues that CGS members reflected upon in the interviews. Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna thought that feminism does not "go with present-day Russia", it is "costly pleasure (*dorogoe udovol'stvie*)". They were conscious of the fact that feminist groups are small and isolated, and in this sense elitist. They ironically cited Lenin's famous comment about the Decembrists as a description of what could be said about feminist organizations in today's Russia: "Terribly strange they are to people, narrow is the circle of these revolutionaries!"[29] This isolation is seen as stemming from the fact that feminism is received so negatively. CGS members acknowledge that their organization is detached from the general populace, but at the same time they see it as extremely difficult to overcome the societal barrier and negative stereotypes attached to feminism. Ironically, feminists in Russia today are accused of precisely the same issues as the feminist movement in Imperial Russia: distance from the 'masses' (read: 'ordinary' women), small membership, and elitism caused by the dominance of educated women (*intelligentki*) (cf. Stites 1978). In this situation, the CGS plays a central role for its members as a sanctuary where one can feel communality with like-minded people. However, the position as a sanctuary is also perceived as having a reverse side: the Center is experienced to be somewhat secluded. CGS members think that Russian society is not ready for the CGS's radical message and consequently the Center remains a *kruzhok*, a narrow circle of experts with a somewhat cliquish character, despite its genuine commitment to openness.

Feminism functions as a vital empancipatory resource for CGS activists. As Valentina Ivanovna put it,

feminist education, on the one hand, helps [to] give one the strength to survive in this totally masculinist cultural tradition. The fact that we know something about feminism makes it easier for us to survive. **Things come easier to us.** On the other hand, this very feminist education (…) is simultaneously about creating a parallel world.

Valentina Ivanovna sees it as politically vital to publicly adhere to the word feminism – for example in the name 'Feminist Press' – *precisely because* it is perceived as something alien and subversive in Russia. Feminism can be seen as an emancipatory framework, which opens new visions for dealing with and organizing gender relations and new space for alternative knowledge production.

Feminism as a political project was contemplated in the group in two ways. Most activists defined the Center as political, but in a different way from the conventional understanding of the term. They made a distinction between a feminist conception of politics – the personal as political – and politics as understood by governmental actors.

SUVI: Would you call the Gender Center political, that the Center's actions are in a way political?

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: No, I wouldn't say so. If you don't regard personal issues as political (*lichnoe kak politicheskoe*). (…) But their [federal security services] idea of politics is that it [is something that takes place] in the sphere of state authority. In this sense, the Gender Center is certainly not a political organization.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: The way we understand it, politics is what we are doing. (…) Because (…) feminism is politics. (…) Besides, how will politics change if more and more people will be educated about gender issues. (…) [But] officially it is not [regarded as] politics. (…) Possibly, the example of our [CGS] leadership, the example of our communication and (…) activities is an (…) experiment of (…) new politics.

The CGS, by its own example and ways of doing things and by offering education in gender studies, is seen as disrupting the conventional understanding of politics and as engendering a new kind of political culture in Russia. Civic organizations, by offering alternative definitions and interpretations of what counts as 'political', can seek to unsettle the dominant political culture (Alvarez *et al.* 1998, 8).

Some CGS members, by contrast, defined the Center as a non-political group. Perhaps they did not knowingly conceive of feminism as a political project, or they associated politics with political parties, from which they wished to distance themselves. Marina Grigorievna, for example, said in her interview that she wished civic groups were "less politicized". The wish to keep politics at arm's length and not to associate the CGS with it is due to the

Soviet political system, which CGS members regard negatively, and to the negative image of politics in today's Russia.

Allies and adversaries

The collective identity of the CGS is also constructed in relation to other women's organizations in Tver', most notably to *Zhenskaia Assambleia* (Women's Assembly, ZA). It is defined as an official *nomenklatura* organization unlike the CGS, which its members define as a grassroots informal organization. The ZA is portrayed as reproducing the spirit and practices of Soviet women's councils, and as a transmission belt (*privodnoi remen'*) and a pocket organization (*karmannaia organizatsiia*) of the administrative and political powers-that-be. By contrast, the CGS is associated with democratic and liberal forces.

CGS members portray professionalism and class position determined by different types of capital as key distinguishing factors between the CGS and the ZA. The ZA is portrayed as an organization of wealthy women representing the political and business elites (economic and political capital), and its activities are assessed as nominal and ineffective. The state/non-state boundary is perceived as being blurred in the ZA, as its members represent simultaneously both the administration and business, and the civic sphere. By contrast, the CGS is represented as a substantial and professional group, drawing on its members' cultural capital.

CGS activists define Western feminist groups as allies of their group. They see their own group and the Women's Crisis Center *Gortenziia* as 'real' (*nastoiashchie*) women's organizations that have a voluntary, independent, grassroots, informal, and non-hierarchical nature.[30] In distinction to real organizations, organizations that were founded in the Soviet era and contemporary *nomenklatura* organizations are seen as reproducing a hierarchical, formal organizational culture with a top-down structure.

RAISA BORISOVNA: [Civic organizations] (…) unite people who came of their own will. Civic organizations – what's so good about them today? They operated during the socialist time, too. But they were all enforced from the top. Now they're grassroots. They are formed because people feel the need to unite and deal with the problems they are currently concerned with. No one drives them forcibly into the organizations. (…) No one is pushing [us in the CGS] from the top. We do what we want to.

SUVI: What do you like most about the Center's activities?

BORIS ANTONOVICH: The informality (*neformal'nyi kharakter*). I mean, there is no structure as such, just people who come together for some time to initiate and implement some project. They are not connected by any other formal links. It's convenient [and] builds no pressure I would say. One is not forced to do something daily, [or] report to someone.

Informality and freedom are stressed as an essential characteristic of the CGS's work. Valentina Ivanovna repeatedly maintained in her interviews that she shuns hierarchically structured organizations and prefers coalitions, networks and groups with an open character. This structure of the CGS can be read as a strategy of distinction; it has knowingly chosen a different structure from Soviet organizations. As Clemens (1997, 50, quoted in Polletta and Jasper 2001, 293) argues, organizational forms can be a source of shared identity. The answer to 'who we are' need not always be a quality or noun, but can also be 'we are people who do these sorts of things in this particular way'. The emphasis on freedom, non-hierarchical, informal, and egalitarian practices in the CGS can be conceived of as an example of 'prefigurative politics' (Breines 1982, quoted in Gamson 1991, 48). The CGS seeks to create and sustain within the practice of the organization the kinds of relationships and practices that 'prefigure' and embody the kind of society they see as desirable, namely democracy based on a participatory civil society.

In the interviews with CGS members, feminism and interpretations concerning motherhood and, more specifically, the relationship between the categories of 'woman' and 'mother', emerge as major division-lines between the Center and other women's groups. CGS members argue that most women's groups in Tver′ focus their activities on motherhood. These groups tend to equate motherhood with womanhood, which is in line with the dominant gender ideology of both Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. By contrast, the CGS wishes to break the seemingly self-evident coupling together of 'women–children–family' and see women as individuals. Because of different ideological underpinnings, the CGS and other women's groups also suggest different strategies for dealing with gender relations. One CGS activist argued that the ZA was founded "in order to help men to put life in order in society" (*chtoby pomogat′ muzhchinam nalazhivat′ zhizn′ v obshchestvo*). The CGS's line, on the contrary, is to organize in order to help women *themselves* make choices and improve their situation. In this sense, to borrow Karen Offen's (1988; quoted in Caiazza 2002) terminology, we can see the CGS representing an 'individualist feminist' strategy, emphasizing women's independence and autonomy, whereas other women's groups, according to CGS members, can be seen employing a 'relational' or 'maternalist' strategy. These different perceptions of gender relations and of a woman's 'place' in society were also perceived as complicating cooperation between women's groups:

VIKTORIIA IVANOVNA: [There are] isolated [women's] organizations, no common policy. We don't meet to nominate candidates, which is certainly bad, in principle. Though the problem with nominations is again differences in the understanding of what a woman is and what she should do. I mean, most women's organizations have, you know, very negative attitudes toward feminism and the word 'feminism' in general. (…) Some want to nominate a woman for a deputy who would only

deal with disabled children, and won't meddle in big politics, won't try to look into the problem of, for instance, the lack of hot water in Tver′. Whereas I think a deputy should first and foremost be a person who would, on the contrary, approach city problems as a whole and meddle in everything, not just social policy (…).

CGS members wish to break away from those traditional gendered positions and fields in society and politics that other women's groups are seen as wanting to reproduce. According to Ekaterina Nikolaevna, ZA was an active 'transmission belt' in the campaign for United Russia in the parliamentary elections in 2003 and supported its conservative gender ideology, which she summarized as "the idea of returning the woman to the family". ZA's alliance with United Russia further reinforced the perceived identity of the ZA as a *nomenklatura* organization in the CGS. Ekaterina Nikolaevna also saw ZA members to be hypocritical, because "although these women [in ZA] are busy at work all day, they urged the rest [of women] to concentrate their efforts on the family and children".

The strong socio-economic polarization and reconfiguration of the class structure in Russia were also regarded in the CGS as creating divisions between women and impeding the creation of ties of solidarity and collective mobilization as women. CGS members contemplated the category of 'woman' and contended that it is, in fact, impossible to unite all women in collective action, even less in one organization, as there are considerable differences between women. Class in particular was recognized as positioning women differently in society. Larisa Aleksandrovna drew a distinction between 'unprofessional' and 'professional' women, associating the women's movement and civic activity with professionalism. She argued that women do not have time to participate in the women's movement *professionally* and that the problems that women's organizations tackle are the kind that only professional women can understand and solve:

LARISA ALEKSANDROVNA: I believe women still have an underdeveloped self-consciousness and legal awareness to be able to defend their rights. This might also be related to this (…) perpetual state of transition. (…) This transition period reflects negatively on the woman (…). She simply has no time to be professionally involved in the women's movement. (…) I can explain what hinders the women's movement – it's the very high polarization of society. There are some very well-off, rich women, who (…) enjoy their rights already, (…) and there are the poor ones. The so-called middle class is very small. So I think it's also this financial stratification that hampers mutual understanding. (…) Unfortunately, women's organizations do not have many members at the moment, but there **can't** be many members now, because these [current] problems can be understood and professionally (*kvalitsifirovanno*) solved only by professional women.

The dilemma of creating bonds between women coming from different social, ethnic and economic positions is by no means specific only for Russian women's groups, but affects women's collective action, in general. Braidotti (1993, 10–11) has written that a crucial challenge for women's political activity is "how to restore intersubjectivity so as to allow differences to create a bond (…) so as to effect lasting political changes. It is the affirmation of a new kind of bonding, a collectivity, resting on the recognition of differences (…)".

Despite the ideological and organizational differences between the CGS and the ZA, there has been some co-operation at the level of the organization leaders. The ZA has, for example, financially supported the CGS's publication about women's history in Tver′. Valentina Ivanovna stressed the need to establish co-operation, not only with women's groups but also with other relevant civic groups, and advocated the idea of coalition-building, networks and strategic co-operation around a certain theme. She found fruitful a strategy of coalition building around issues where it is possible to find common ground instead of creating fixed collaborative structures. The coalition and network forms retain the multiplicity of voices and actors in the public sphere, because organizations are not forced to merge, but engage as independent actors in a temporary joint action. This reflects the 'toolkit' of collective activity that Valentina Ivanovna and other CGS members draw on: they wish to distinguish themselves from the Soviet model of organizing that suppressed the politicization of differences.

Representation and legitimacy are important and tricky questions in the context of women's organizations. Scholars have argued that Russian feminist groups tend to be closer to their transnational partners than the constituencies they are meant to represent (Henderson 2003, 2–13). However, when scholars contend that women's groups do not represent those people they are *meant* to represent, it is often unclear whether this constituency is defined by the scholar or by the group itself. For example, although the CGS is a women's group in the sense that it aims at the emancipation and improvement of women's rights, 'women' are not its target group or constituency *per se*, but rather university students. CGS activists recognize the differences between women and their implications for organizing and the scope of activity. They prefer networks and coalitions rather than one unified organization and wish to focus on special target groups instead of a misleadingly unitary group of 'women'.

Moreover, in this discussion about representation, a problematic dichotomy between 'traditional' and 'feminist' women's organizations is frequently constructed. Henderson (ibid., 79, 141) contends that donors have funded such 'Western' themes as gender, environment and human rights, and criticizes feminist groups, in particular groups focused on gender studies, for being more detached from the local community than the women's groups she calls 'conservative' and 'traditional'. Sundstrom (2005, 445–46) has also seen as problematic that "donors have preferred to support feminist

intellectuals (…) rather than traditionally minded activists who often work more closely with average citizens". This dichotomous representation of women's organizations overlooks the multiplicity of identifications and lines of activity in women's groups. Furthermore, it is problematic to straightforwardly draw signs of equality between 'feminism' and 'Western', on the one hand, and between 'traditional', 'average citizens' and 'non-feminism', on the other. Representation of feminism as a 'Western' theme ignores the long history of Russian feminism and effectively makes it 'other' by reproducing the common myth about feminism as something 'alien' in Russia. This is, indeed, the myth that the CGS strives to tear down with its activities. Valentina Ivanovna problematized the 'exceptional Westernness' of gender studies in her interview:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: But concerning the West, (…) they tell me: "you use Western concepts! You can't even translate the word 'gender' into Russian!" (…) "Poor, poor you! You are going to get into a big trap now!" You know, it would be very difficult to articulate 'gender' in Russian, one would need to say too many words. And now I say, all right, I agree – it's a Western word, true. (…) Well, OK – can you name at least one notion in sociology [that is not Western]. You've been using sociological terms for already a hundred years (…) Status, sotsializatsiia, then sotsializm, ideologiia (*status*, *socialization*, *socialism*, *ideology*). I mean, why do you think that sociology in general can use Western terminology, whereas gender studies [cannot]? (*laughing*) (…) I say, what does Western mean?[31]

We as a team and collective: emotional capital and affective ties

A key dimension of the CGS's collective identity is that it is portrayed as a collective (*kollektiv*) and a team (*komanda*). This collective is portrayed as being distinct from Soviet collectives. Collectives were the basic unit of Soviet society and they were never merely economic entities, but had spiritual, moral and mythical dimensions (Ashwin 1999, 10). The Soviet moral economy was based on the subordination of the individual to the collective and on the duty (*dolg*) of every individual towards the collective (Bertaux 2004, 45). In the CGS, by contrast, the collective is built on respect for the individual and individual liberty and, instead of duty, CGS members emphasize responsibility (*otvetstvennost'*).[32] Valentina Ivanovna argued: "Everyone here [in the CGS] is an outstanding personality, independent, interesting. (…) We know how to build relationships in which everyone finds their own niche. (…) we complement each other. (…) And I have a feeling the CGS is noted for this healthy team spirit (*zdorovyi kollektivizm*) built upon individualism."

When defining the CGS as a collective based on individualism, Valentina Ivanovna associates the CGS with civil society. She defined earlier civil

society to be characterized by community (*kom'iuniti*), the commune (*obshchina*) and collectivism (*kollektivizm*). Thus, the CGS acquires the same meanings as civil society: the CGS is represented as being on a small scale what civil society is on a large scale. When CGS activists refer to the Center as a collective or emphasize collectivism, they always add some attributes to it, for example, 'healthy', or collectivism 'in a good sense', in order to make a distinction between themselves and Soviet collectives.

LARISA ALEKSANDROVNA: I like the work style [in the CGS]. Everyone is in charge of their own part of the work. (…) [I like] the willingness to help, to co-operate. Team spirit (*kollektivizm*) in the best sense of the word. That is, individual study on the one hand, and a certain collective support and understanding, on the other.

Marina Grigorievna portrayed 'societal centers' (*obshchestvennye tsentry*), as she named organizations like the CGS, as new collectives replacing the Soviet ones that have disintegrated as a consequence of the social transformation. In her view, "these centers are now, first and foremost, interesting and necessary for lonely people. Such centers should be very 'warm'." She characterized civic organizations as sanctuaries from the hardships of everyday life. They can provide a sense of belonging and offer new spaces of sociality and communality.

The CGS is based not only on collegial or organizational ties, but also on friendship and marital ties. CGS members emphasize sociability and the emotional aspect of the organization's work as highly important; the Center is portrayed as an *emotional community*. The CGS offers mutual support, help, solidarity, and *obshchenie*.[33] The Center reproduces the traditional organizational mode of Russian intelligentsia being a *kruzhok* of friends, spouses and colleagues in which intensive communication and spending time together has a key role. The cordial atmosphere of the CGS was often mentioned as a particularly appealing aspect of participating in the group. Viktoriia Ivanovna described the CGS, compared to other university departments, as "absolutely another type of collective" marked by friendly relations and support. The CGS was also referred to as a "group of people who understand" and "a group/center of like-minded people" (*gruppa/tsentr edinomyshlennikov*). Sofiia Vladimirovna jokingly alluded to the CGS with the term 'Cosa Nostra'.[34] This metaphor juxtaposes the CGS with the Sicilian mafia, implying that the CGS has family-like ties of solidarity and loyalty. Two CGS members also referred to Valentina Ivanovna as their "second mother". This illustrates how the CGS acquires meanings that are linked with intimate relationships, and how the activities of the Center are understood to emulate family-like ties of loyalty and togetherness.[35]

The CGS operates in an environment that is interpreted as perceiving feminism with hostility and suspicion, and hence mutual solidarity and support in the group become extremely important. Dissatisfaction about the

Russian gender system, which is experienced as oppressive and limiting, connect CGS members to the group and make it a sort of a 'haven' for its members. Identity work is of crucial importance in order to sustain solidarity and commitment in all social movements and organizations (Polletta and Jasper 2001, 291, 297), but it is even more critical during periods of limited political opportunities, which is true for feminist groups in today's Russia. Because feminism does not resonate in Russian society, the emotional commitment of its core members is an important resource for the CGS.[36]

I suggest that the concept of 'emotional capital', developed by Helga Nowotny (1981) and Diane Reay (2000; 2004), is useful in understanding and theorizing the meaning of emotions in civic activity.[37] Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of capital, Nowotny sees emotional capital as a subcategory of social capital. She defines it, in a somewhat vague manner, as "knowledge, contacts and relations as well as the emotionally valued skills and assets, which hold within any social network characterized at least partly by affective ties". Reay (2004, 61), for her part, understands emotional capital as a stock of emotional resources, including positive and negative emotions, that individuals may draw on. I adopt a slightly different definition of emotional capital and define it to refer to *emotional ties between the participants of the organization that engender commitment to the group, solidarity, communality and trust*. Both Reay and Nowotny see emotional capital as a characteristic of the private sphere: emotional capital is usually "confined within the bounds of affective relationships of family and friends and encompasses the emotional resources you hand to those you care about" (Reay 2004, 60). However, as the analysis of the CGS illustrates, emotional capital can equally be created outside the private sphere, in civic organizations. There is a dialectical relationship between emotional capital and collective identity: emotional work is important for the formation of collective identity (Hunt and Benford 2004, 446), and collective identities can thus be understood as affective loyalties (Goodwin *et al*. 2004, 418–19; see also Melucci 1995, 343). Generation of emotional capital requires a shared collective identity with which members connect themselves.

The creation of emotional capital in the CGS is centrally linked with the fact that the groups builds upon multiplex affective ties: collegial, marital and friendship ties unite the participants. Emotions are already invested in the relationships between the members prior to participation, and participation strengthens members' attachment to the group and each other. This type of affective embeddedness in social networks supports continued participation and discourages leaving (Diani 2004, 342). However, the affective ties between group members can not only glue the group together and function as the engine sustaining organizational activity, but they can also make the group vulnerable and potentially contribute to its dissolution. For example, in the event of divorce an organization having a family or married couple as a core could end up in trouble. Conflicts can also be painful to

deal with in a group that is based on close emotional ties. The affective nature of interaction in the CGS has also, in part, produced a certain inward-looking orientation in the group.

Emotional capital is an important resource for the CGS as it has relatively few other forms of capital. Emotional commitment of the members keeps the group functioning also when economic capital is in short supply. For example, members of the Center continued teaching in the CGS's evening school, although the Center could not pay them salaries or could pay very little. However, the volatile economic and political situation in the country gnaws at the effect of emotional capital. Although CGS members are emotionally committed to the group, a lack of free time owing to the heavy workload most of the members have and the increasingly strenuous situation of civic activities in Putin's Russia discourages group members from investing considerable economic, mental and time resources to CGS's activities.

Negotiating teamwork and hierarchy

A central tension in the CGS is constructed between the teamwork and leader-centerdness. Although the CGS is discursively constructed as a collective and a team, it is nevertheless strongly associated with its leader, which runs counter to the discursive adherence to teamwork. During the fieldwork, I observed how centrally the CGS's work revolved around Valentina Ivanovna's person. One of the members called the CGS "Valentina Ivanovna's child". Valentina Ivanovna seemed to be the source of most of the ideas and projects in the Center. This led me to the conclusion that the idea of teamwork was more an *aspiration* and an *ideal* than a description of existing reality. Despite the commitment to democratic practices, there persistently emerged hierarchy in the group between the leader and the members. In what follows, I will unpack the processes that create this contradiction between discourses and organizational practices.

The CGS was formed around Valentina Ivanovna and all CGS members considered her as the soul of the Center. Not only the CGS, but also the whole women's movement in Tver′ was associated with Valentina Ivanovna in the interviews. Most CGS members explained that they joined the group because of Valentina Ivanovna: either she had asked them or they had been drawn to the Center because of her charisma and inspiring role as a teacher. The emotional ties that characterize participation in the CGS manifested themselves here. Lidiia Maksimovna, for example, commented:

> Of course, the core and backbone of all the activities here is Valentina Ivanovna. She is without doubt the key person here, not just as the leader, but also as an ideologist. I even call her my second mother, because she helped me a lot during my life. When she said there's going to be this Center, I knew immediately that I was going to join it.

The public relations of the CGS – its relations with local women's organizations, authorities and businesswomen, and international donors – rest on Valentina Ivanovna's shoulders. Although Valentina Ivanovna's PR responsibilities can be seen as stemming from a division of labor in the Center, it is nevertheless problematic, because public relations are vital for the CGS's work and when they hinge exclusively on Valentina Ivanovna, it makes the Center vulnerable. This became particularly evident when Valentina Ivanovna fell ill in 2002. My field notes from that period reveal many observations on how the activities of the CGS suffered as a result of her illness.

What factors create and help sustain leader-centerdness despite the appreciation of teamwork and the fact that Valentina Ivanovna herself systematically strives to strengthen the team orientation and diminish the CGS's dependency on her? The fact that she takes responsibility for public relations is one factor that essentially produces leader-centeredness, but it is only a symptom of two practices: practices of donor agencies and patronage practices associated with the Soviet/Russian tradition of getting things done through having connections (*sviazi*).

The practices of donor organizations have created and reproduced a personification of organizational work, that is, activities tend to be associated with the leader. CGS members surmised that donors prefer to finance certain 'names', leaders of organizations that they know and with which they have worked before. They saw that the success of the CGS in obtaining funding from Western donors was largely due to Valentina Ivanovna's reputation:

SUVI: Do you think it's generally easy to find (…) grants?
BORIS ANTONOVICH: At the moment it's quite easy. But there's one reason why it seems easier in Tver′ – it's probably owing to the personal qualities of Valentina Ivanovna Uspenskaia, who has long been involved in women's problems, feminism, and gender studies proper. So she [is] the engine, I guess.

LARISA ALEKSANDROVNA: I think a lot also depends on the leader, who heads the organization. If s/he is more or less known, foundations as a rule give money because of the name. (…) Unfortunately. (…) because an unknown person is not attractive.

A widespread belief among civic organizations, including the CGS, is that donors prefer to work with people and organizations they already know.[38] However, some of the donor representatives I interviewed disagreed with this. The co-ordinator of the Soros Foundation in Tver′ stressed that funds are allocated on a competitive basis and both small and big organizations may receive grants if their projects are innovative. A representative of the

Charity Aid Foundation's (CAF) office in Moscow also argued that up to 80 percent of the grants are allocated to first-timers and that small organizations also may receive support: "We support **good** projects, projects that have sense, projects that provide tangible help. **Who** implements them – that's a secondary issue." By contrast, the representative of the British Council in Moscow did state that the Council tends to prefer established organizations with a good track record.

Although it would not be true that donor agencies prefer to support organizations and people they already know, the fact remains that as CGS members think this is the case, the responsibility for obtaining funding remains on the shoulders of the 'name' of the organization, that is, Valentina Ivanovna. This means that the leader becomes the 'business card' of the organization vis-à-vis the general public and donors. According to Valentina Ivanovna, CGS members are afraid of disrupting this pattern, because the stakes are so high: grant money is vital for the survival of the CGS's activities and for its members. Consequently no one is willing to put this at risk by becoming the CGS's applicant for grants, because they do not have such well-established connections and reputation among donors as Valentina Ivanaovna has. This creates a kind of vicious circle, since CGS members cannot make themselves known among donors without applying for money and leading projects. This reveals a tension between 'prefigurative politics' and strategies of action. The CGS struggles to preserve prefigurative principles of teamwork, a non-hierarchical form, openness and informality whilst simultaneously coming to grips with strategic imperatives that favour and produce leader-centerdness. This was a difficult issue especially for Valentina Ivanovna. She knew that her personal symbolic capital had been crucial in helping the CGS obtain funding, but at the same time this kind of leader-centerdness was exactly the kind of organizational practice from which she wanted to break away. The problem is that since Valentina Ivanovna's symbolic capital is hers, that is, it is personal capital and not institutional capital (Bourdieu 1991, 194), it cannot be transferred; it thus remains with her and the CGS would lose it if she left the group.

This situation created considerable pressure on Valentina Ivanovna, as so many hopes and expectations rested on her shoulders. In our discussions, she voiced her exhaustion concerning the financial burden she had to carry for the Center. She received help from her colleagues in planning the grant applications, but carried the primary responsibility for the application procedure and for the financial sustainability of the Center. In the course of my fieldwork, it became apparent that other members of the CGS were not well aware of the financial issues of the Center and knew relatively little about the CGS's relations with donors. For example, when we asked Viktoriia Ivanovna with what foundations the CGS collaborates, she replied: "I can't say. I don't care. Valentina Ivanovna deals with these issues." The fact that financial issues are concentrated in the hands of organization leaders was raised as problematic by Larisa Aleksandrovna:

KATIA: What's your impression regarding the illegality of the activities of civic organizations? Do civic organizations ever get grants and use them improperly?

LARISA ALEKSANDROVNA: You know, this is a question that should be asked of the leaders. Because, normally, the people who work in these organizations are not informed about where the money goes. They have no idea of even how much the leaders earn and where the money goes. There's no reporting at all. The leader reports to the donor only. But how s/he does it, and what is done, is only known to maybe two or three people who are closest to the leader.

The interviewee draws an undemocratic picture about financial issues in organizations. According to her, rank-and-file participants do not usually have a clue about financial matters, whereas the leader can do practically whatever s/he wishes with the grants as long as the donors are satisfied. This implies that the leader's accountability is first and foremost to donors and not to organization members. I suggest that donor practices, actual and imagined (the impressions that activists hold), have created and sustained in the CGS and other civic organizations leader-centerdness and a certain hierarchy between the leader and rank-and-file members. Members are financially dependent on the leader, which hampers the division of labor within the organization and gives the leader, whether s/he wants it or not, an extensive responsibility and scope of activity in organizational matters.

The second factor contributing to leader-centeredness is patronage and personal connections, which have great importance in Russian society.[39] Valentina Ivanovna is in charge of establishing and maintaining relations with local organizations and institutions, and other CGS members know little about the group's ties with other organizations or the authorities. The public relations of the CGS are established primarily at the leadership level between Valentina Ivanovna and co-operation partners. Thus, relations are *interpersonal* rather than *inter-institutional*. The CGS's dependence on Valentina Ivanovna became more noticeable during her illness. The Center was not completely paralyzed, but it lived frugally. No one really substituted for Valentina Ivanovna or took primary responsibility for running the organization. Her illness concretely showed the weakness of teamwork. Viktoriia Ivanovna summarized the problem well: "Valentina Ivanovna, she's the moving, organizing force here. The activities have surely declined somewhat. She can though hand some functions over to us, and we do the job." As this quote reveals, CGS members were ready to implement those tasks that Valentina Ivanovna transferred to them, but they were reluctant to carry out activities independently. Most CGS activists were aware of the leader-centeredness in the group, and some also contemplated it critically:

LARISA ALEKSANDROVNA: The point is, I believe, the Center's activities must not rely on one person. The fact is that civic organizations imply a

distribution of functions, so the work doesn't get affected. I think, it
will, in a sense, affect it seriously, this [Valentina Ivanovna's] illness.
Because (…) this person holds all the organizational strings in her
hands. And while it's very difficult for her to move, and everything is
based on personal contacts, I think we are still going to feel the reper-
cussions of that. Alas!

The interviewee sees it as problematic that because the group depends on
Valentina Ivanovna and her personal connections, her illness means that
these connections cannot be used to the maximum. However, this depen-
dency on the leader was also understood in the CGS as a more general
feature of the contemporary Russian civic sphere. According to Marina
Grigorievna,

> at the current stage, many [Russian] organizations are tied to the leader.
> A person shows up like Valentina Ivanovna. When something happens
> to her, difficulties appear immediately. In the West, it seems, civic
> organizations are well-established. It's always like that: the younger the
> organization, the more important the leader's role is.

Valentina Ivanovna was aware of and constantly negotiated the tension
between the striving to cultivate teamwork and the group's dependence on
her as a result of the tradition of associating the organization with its
leader:

VALENTINA IVNOVNA: Actually, some things have been suspended because of
[my] illness. (…) Some things depended on me (…) It's very common in
our society, that a certain enterprise is associated with a specific name.
One has to take this into account. So you start using your name … (…)
In this sense, I've certainly missed certain opportunities that could've
been used to expand our activities. (…) But anyway, I think this [my
illness] didn't have much of an impact. Because (…) most of our [CGS]
team has already realized the essential fact that in addition to being a
grand team together, each one of us has also the right to our own pro-
jects. (…) Though understandably, let's not be hypocrites, under-
standably it's [the CGS] associated with me.

Valentina Ivanovna aims at building up a team in order to decrease her role
in the group, but at the same time she tries to use her reputation in order to
advocate the interests and strengthen the position of the CGS. This is again
an example of tactical action (cf. de Certeau 1984): the CGS operates in a
strategic framework set by the powers-that-be, but Valentina Ivanovna
tries tactically to make use of this framework, turn it into an 'opportu-
nity' in order to further the ideas of the CGS. Although the CGS tries to
break away from the practice of accomplishing tasks through personal

connections, it also inevitably ends up reproducing this practice when it tactically uses it for the benefit of the organization. Valentina Ivanovna voiced many times her dislike of using *sviazi* and engaging in tactical manoeuvres. This is, however, a price that has to be paid: the activities of the CGS take place in and are constrained by the very same structures of power that it seeks to destabilize and break away from.

In addition to patronage and donor practices, there is still one factor that can be seen to produce leader-centeredness in the CGS. Valentina Ivanovna voiced in her interviews the opinion that CGS members are afraid of taking more responsibility for the activities of the Center: "There probably exists a tint of, I don't know, fear or something. Some sort of unconscious feeling, when people are afraid of giving up this collectiveness."[40] Other CGS members did not discuss with me their alleged reluctance to take on more responsibility for the Center, although some of them critically reflected upon the Center's dependency on Valentina Ivanovna. The possible reluctance of CGS members to take more responsibility for the group is at least partly caused by members' economically constrained situation, leading to lack of time and the exhausting daily struggle for survival. Also the politically insecure situation of civic organizations in Russia and diminishing foreign support for activism may discourage more active involvement.

What kinds of strategies are there in the CGS to decrease leader-centeredness and strengthen the team? Institutionalization is one strategy. CGS members saw that the institutionalized status of the CGS at the university reduces the tendency to associate the group with its leader only. As Valentina Ivanovna put it, "the better we manage to establish the Center [as a part of the University], the less weight [my] name will have". Another strategy is to advance young scholars in their careers. For example, Valentina Ivanovna had helped Ekaterina Nikolaevna to gain a position as a vice-head of one of the university departments. It was considered important to have people who view gender studies positively in high university positions. To engage young people in the CGS and to encourage them to pursue their careers would entail that the CGS would also have 'names' in the future.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the formation of collective identity in the CGS. The prognostic frame names the goals the CGS wishes to achieve. The immediate goals include giving support to scholars involved in gender studies; the dissemination of information and the popularization of feminism, gender studies and the women's movement; highlighting women's problems in society; and the provision of intellectual resources for local women's organizations. The long-term goals include the emancipation of women and men and the transformation of the gender system by changing people's worldviews. The diagnostic frame in the CGS identifies the Soviet system as the source of problems in contemporary Russia, and overcoming this legacy

forms the *raison d'être* of the CGS's activities. The members believe that the Soviet system positioned both women and men under an oppressive state patriarchy, which deprived them of agency, initiative and individual responsibility. The CGS seeks to engender a new citizen-subject who is independent, responsible and capable of defending his or her rights. The CGS seeks to attain these goals through education, research, publishing and interaction with the local community. It wishes to distance itself from the Soviet past and has consciously sought to cultivate organizational practices that differ from those of Soviet organizations.

The collective identity of the CGS is multifaceted and allows the members to identify themselves with it in different ways. For some, civil society and feminism are the central elements in participation, while for others the feeling of belonging to an emotionally rewarding team is the most important factor. Western liberal democracy and civil society emerge as an important framework for the CGS's self-understanding. Civil society is defined as a horizon, ideal and utopia and it functions as a notion of resistance in the political environment of 'verticals of power'. The concept of civil society is also employed in envisioning a new type of communality and citizenship that builds upon respect for individuality. Whereas the Soviet social order was built upon the principle of the subordination of the individual to the needs of the collective, CGS members envision a social order in which the individual precedes the collective. Citizenship is not perceived as an individual's *duty* toward the state, as in the official Soviet conception, but as the individual's *responsibility* for him/herself and the local community.

CGS members take the individual as the starting point for social change. They emphasize individual responsibility and self-reliance and seek to break away from Soviet state paternalism, but they also envision new practices of commonality and solidarity. This centrality of the individual in the CGS finds an interesting parallel in Rivkin-Fish's (2005) study, which identifies a strong individualizing tendency in health care institutions and practices in Russia. Rivkin-Fish argues that individualization has meant avoiding the articulation of collective social interests and of making claims on the state and influencing policy-making. However, in the context of the CGS, the individualizing and collective orientations are not mutually exclusive, but connected to each other. The repertoire of activity in the CGS stems from the belief that change can best be initiated at the level of the individual and that collective action must be based on respect for individuality.

Feminism unites CGS members and is the core of the group's collective identity. Feminism functions in the CGS as an emancipatory resource offering tools for the construction of a 'parallel world', which, however, simultaneously entails a certain seclusion, leaving the CGS a small circle of professionals. This isolation and elitism surrounding feminist activities are acknowledged by and reflected upon in the CGS. CGS members also define the Center's identity in relation to other women's groups. Civic organizations defined as Soviet-type *nomenklatura* organizations function as the

'other' from which the CGS distances itself. The CGS's identity acquires in this context such attributes as independent, professional, non-hierarchical, informal, democratic, and being based on grassroots mobilization and freedom. The group members understand differences in women's class positions and different gender ideologies in women's groups as hindering the creation of solidarity and joint action among women.

A distinctive feature of the Center's identity is the contradiction between discursive and organizational practices. The group is discursively portrayed as a democratic and non-hierarchical collective, but the organizational practices produce gravitation towards the leader and dependency on her. Emotional involvement, reinforced by multiple affective ties that unite CGS members, functions as the glue that keeps the group together. However, it also leaves it vulnerable to conflicts, which may be more difficult to handle because of intensive emotional ties. The leader-centeredness of the group is mainly brought about by donor practices and patronage, but it is also arguably caused by the reluctance of the group members to invest more time and energy in the activities of the Center. The CGS has sought to reduce this leader-centeredness by institutionalizing its activities and advancing young scholars to responsible positions at the university.

The cultural capital in the form of education and scientific expertise and the social capital in the form of social networks that the CGS builds upon have centrally facilitated the activities of the group. CGS activists have been able to accumulate and sustain cultural capital and turn it into economic capital with the help of the CGS's dual status as a civic organization and a university structure. This institutional form has been both a survival strategy in the new environment and a tool to pursue social change. The university has provided CGS members with a setting conducive to the accumulation and conversion of capital. The analysis of the CGS also contributes interestingly to the discussion of the role of social networks in civic organizations. As was discussed in Chapter 2, it has been argued that the strength of informal networks in Russia inhibits people's participation in civic organizations (Howard 2003). This argument, however, assumes that people join voluntary organizations only because they need help or services. Howard (ibid.), for instance, investigates the importance of social networks for civic participation by asking his respondents how often they rely on friends for help in fixing their house or car, or assisting someone in their family, or in coping with difficult situations in general. This conception ignores the idea that people join organizations also for the sake of *identity* and *emotional ties*. The analysis of the CGS reveals how friendship, collegial and family ties may *facilitate* rather than inhibit civic participation, and how identities are of central importance in civic participation.

5 The weakness of collective identity
The Trade Union of Health Care Workers

This chapter discusses collective identity formation in the Trade Union of Health Care Workers (TUHW).[1] It explores how the TUHW has negotiated its identity, goals and strategies in the juncture of the Soviet past and the social transformation of the 1990s. The previous chapter illustrated how a multidimensional collective identity and emotional commitment, reinforced by the multiple ties between participants, were central factors in engendering and sustaining the activities of the Centre for Women's History and Gender Studies (CGS). In the TUHW, by contrast, we are faced with a *weakness* of collective identity. The TUHW has not been able to create a shared understanding of who 'we' are that would find resonance with its members and engender a sense of emotional commitment.

This paradox of the deterioration of working conditions and the persistent non-mobilization of labor in Russia has exercised the minds of academics. Post-communist trade union movements and labor have been described as weak compared to their Western European counterparts. A general consensus seems to prevail that trade unions have not been able successfully to defend the interests of workers, and a number of explanations for this have been proposed: ineffectiveness of corporatist institutions; lack of union competition (competition about resources and members between unions would make them stronger); strikes are difficult to organize because of widespread economic problems, which undermines trade unions' position; and the use of individual 'exit' rather than collective 'voice' (Crowley n.d.). Crowley contends that none of these explanations can sufficiently explain trade union weakness, but proposes that the weakness is due to the institutional and ideological 'legacies' of communism, although he admits that these legacies cannot fully explain the phenomenon either. Ashwin and Clarke (2003, 263), for their part, have explained the weakness of the trade unions as stemming from their inability to mobilize their members, their dependence for institutional survival on the rights and privileges inherited from the Soviet era, and the conciliatory practice of social partnership. Ashwin (1999) has also argued that workers' non-mobilization derives from the state paternalism that privileges informal relations and makes workers look to a leader to solve problems. All these explanations,

however, have overlooked identity as a salient dimension of collective action.[2] In this chapter I argue that the collective identity approach adds an essential dimension to understanding the weakness of trade unions and helps to explain workers' non-mobilization.

As in the case of the CGS, recollection of the Soviet past operates as a central articulating principle in the identity construction of the TUHW. It has had to renegotiate its place and identity in a very different way from the CGS, because of its background as a Soviet societal organization. CGS and TUHW members also regard the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent social transformation in a very different way. In the CGS, the Soviet past is interpreted as having victimized people and made them incapable of agency and initiative, whilst in the TUHW the Soviet past and Communist morality function as a positive point of reference. Life in the Soviet Union is remembered, for the most part, with warmth and nostalgia. Whereas CGS members signify the social transformation as liberating, TUHW members regard the transformation as threatening and distressing, as having radically worsened their living and working conditions and the opportunities of the TUHW to defend its members.

I interpret the collapse of the Soviet system as a cultural trauma, "dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric" (Eyerman 2001, 1–2), which for TUHW activists has profound implications for their identity-work. Cultural trauma evokes negative affects and violates the fundamental principles of the group. The interviews with TUHW members are filled with powerful negative emotions of pain, disappointment, anger and humiliation, which can be read as indicators of the cultural trauma. Cultural trauma is socially produced and shared and it requires collective interpretation and sense-making. Eyerman (ibid., 14) suggests that resolving cultural trauma involves a rearticulation of collective identity. We can thus understand the articulations of 'us' in the TUHW interviews as attempts to come to grips with the cultural trauma and to create a sense of who 'we' are and where 'we' are going in new circumstances.

This chapter begins with mapping the history of the trade union movement in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia and discussing the basic features of the TUHW. After that the changes in the health care system are briefly examined. In the next section the goals and repertoire of activities of the TUHW are explored. The last section consists of the discussion of the Union's self-identity, which encompasses an all-inclusive membership and the disidentification and identification with political parties and civic organizations. In addition, I will discuss a potential element of collective-identity that is not articulated – gender.

History of the Russian trade union movement

The trade union movement went through profound changes as a result of the demise of the Soviet system. Most unions, including the TUHW, survived

this change and continue their work today. During perestroika, new alternative trade unions also emerged around certain professions (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 1–3), but the traditional unions held out and today the absolute majority, 95 percent of unionized workers, are still represented by these unions (Kubicek 2002, 608).[3]

Soviet trade unions were governmental organizations subject to the Party-state. They were not based on workers' self-organization, and membership in them was obligatory. Trade unions as all other societal organizations in the Soviet Union were organized hierarchically from the top down and had an all-Union, Moscow-led organization structure. Unions were organized on the basis of individual branches and not profession. Unlike many Western trade unions, Soviet unions also included the management in their membership. This stemmed from the conviction that there could not exist any contradictory interests between workers and the management, as the Soviet system had abolished the antagonism between labor and capital, and every citizen was to work for the benefit of the state. Because of this, unions could not articulate a conflict between the workers and the management if one arose. The workers were linked to the labor collective as supplicants of benefits and objects of various measures, not as political subjects. In this sense the labor collective was for them at the same time a source of social security and a site of subordination (Ashwin 1999, 14).

Soviet trade unions had a triple role. First, they served as 'transmission belts' mediating between the state and masses. They were to keep up order and discipline at workplaces and monitor the fulfilment of the production plan. Second, they functioned as an ally of management and took care of the distribution of a number of work-related services and benefits, such as childcare, housing and cultural facilities, which were of crucial importance for workers' everyday life. Thus, unions were responsible for such services that are today provided by regional and municipal authorities, private enterprises and civic organizations. In addition, unions lobbied the ministries together with the management. Third, unions were able, albeit to a limited degree, to defend workers against the management in cases of unjustified dismissals or violations of safety codes, but only within the guidelines set by the Party (Kubicek 2002, 607; Ashwin and Clarke 2003).

With the disintegration of the Soviet system, the role of the trade unions was redefined. Trade unions declared themselves as civic associations independent of the state, political parties and economic bodies. Article 2 of the Federal Law on trade unions of 1996 defines a trade union as a "citizens' voluntary civic association (*dobrovol'noe obshchestvennoe ob″edinenie*) that protects and represents workers' social and labor rights and interests". Trade unions are today among the largest civic organizations in Russia, representing a major actor in the civic field. In spite of this, trade unions have often been ignored in studies of Russian civil society development, although workers' movements in the West are understood as an important element of civil society (Peschanskii 1998; Kubicek 2002). Russian trade

unions have retained their geographically extensive, hierarchically organized structure. The branch-based model of organization has also remained intact, that is, unions unite all workers employed in a particular sector. The TUHW, for example, represents all employees in the health care sector, including doctors, nurses, cooks, drivers, cleaners, etc. In this respect it differs from a number of Western trade unions that are organized on a professional basis; for example, nurses and doctors are organized in their own distinctive unions. There are differences in activities between public sector trade unions and trade unions operating in private sector enterprises. The analysis of the TUHW thus highlights conditions and patterns of action of the public sector unions.

Unions and health care in flux

The TUHW was established in Kalinin (Tver′) in 1935, and hence has a long history in the region. It consists of a regional office (*oblastnoi komitet*, i.e. *obkom*) and primary organizations located in medical establishments and led by trade union committees (*profsoiuznye komitety*, i.e. *profkomy*). The TUHW is affiliated to the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Health Care Workers that unites all regional health care unions in Russia, and to the regional federation of branch unions, which gathers together trade unions working in the territory of Tver′ region. It is also a member organization of the umbrella organization 'Federation of Independent Trade Unions of the Russian Federation' (FNPR).

The Tver′ *obkom* has five paid employees: president, legal adviser, economist, bookkeeper and secretary, all of them women.[4] My key interviewee was the TUHW's *obkom* president, Galina Leonidovna, an articulate woman in her sixties. She was very helpful and put me in contact with union members whom I could interview.[5] She has made a long career in the trade union movement. She began as a *profkom* president and moved to the position of the first secretary of the Kalinin *obkom* in 1988. She has continued as the *obkom* president in the post-Soviet TUHW. The interviewed TUHW activists respected her as a competent leader.

I also interviewed the *obkom* legal adviser, Nina Petrovna, who also began her career in the TUHW during the Soviet era. In addition to *obkom* staff, I interviewed *profkom* presidents. In two interviews, the *profkom* president was also accompanied by rank-and-file members. Two of the interviewees were deputy-chief doctors and thus represented the hospital management. Two of the interviewed *profkom* presidents were paid full-time presidents, while other presidents performed their duties voluntarily. This is a notable change from the Soviet era, when *profkom* presidents were, as a rule, paid full-time trade union workers. The majority of *profkom* presidents had held their position for years, some even for decades. This testifies to a considerable continuity vis-à-vis the Soviet trade union movement. Twelve of the interviewed activists were women and only one was a man. Only two

interviewees were born in the 1960s–1970s; the others were born during 1930–50. This composition of TUHW interviewees reflects the general gender and age composition in the Union.

Almost all health care establishments in Tver′ still have a *profkom*, which usually consists of five–seven members including an elected *profkom* president. Unionization rates differ significantly between establishments: some health care units have a meagre membership percentage of 0.5, whereas some units have retained 100 percent membership. In Tver′ city the membership rate was a bit lower (63 percent) than in the region on average (72 percent).[6] (*Ob′′iasnitel′naia zapiska k statisticheskomu otchetu za 2001 god*). Health care is a strongly female-dominated and extremely low-paid field.[7] The low salaries gnaw at professional practices and work motivation.[8] The TUHW, like Russian trade unions in general, finances its activities through membership fees, which constitute one percent of a salary.

The Soviet state proclaimed the Soviet health care system to be the best in the world. It was one of the symbolic victory signs of the Soviet Union over capitalist societies. The Soviet state was to provide free and high-quality health services for all citizens. Medical doctors, having a demanding and long higher education, had a symbolically valued position in Soviet society. This symbolic capital enjoyed by the medical profession and the pride in the Soviet health care system also often emerged in my interviews with TUHW activists. They felt that the medical profession and health care system had faced serious drawbacks as a result of the social transformation of the 1990s. One of the activists commented on this as follows:

> In our [Soviet] health care system, the prophylactic principle (*profilakticheskii printsip*) was regarded as the best in the world. When perestroika began, then, naturally, our health care was rebuilt. And it has turned out that we are behind the whole world. And we used to be the best! Even foreign delegations came [to familiarize themselves with our medicine], and as far as I remember and know, our system was regarded as one of the best in the world.

TUHW activists also emphasized how Russian doctors have to rely more on their talent and skills in medical work than doctors in the West, because of the lack of sophisticated technology and equipment.

However, although the interviewed TUHW activists portrayed the health care system as having radically deteriorated after the Soviet era, the Soviet health care system also had serious problems and shortcomings. Health services suffered from a chronic lack of sufficient funding, which reverberated, in particular, in the regional health services (Ivanov, Vichnevsky and Zakharov 2006, 419). For example, still in the mid-1980s, 15 percent of hospitals had no running water, 49 percent had no hot water on tap, 24 percent no sewer systems, and 45 percent no baths or showers (Goskomstat USSR 1990, quoted in ibid., 417). The egalitarian principle in health service

delivery also eroded during the Soviet era. The deficiencies in the centrally planned health care system gave birth to alternative health services under the auspices of a number of Soviet institutions, such as ministries and the Academy of Sciences. These alternative services had better equipment and more highly qualified staff than ordinary health institutions. Thus, access to health services was conditioned by the person's profession and social status in Soviet society. The principle of free access to medical services, which was the key principle of Soviet ideology, was also significantly undermined during the 1970s–1980s by the mediocre quality and efficiency of health services (Ivanov *et al.* 2006, 417–21).

The Russian health care system was decentralized at the beginning of the 1990s. The current system is a combination of private and public services, including compulsory health insurance introduced in 1993 and the provision of certain basic services (Rivkin-Fish 2005, 79; Salmi 2003, 110). The biggest problem is the disparity between the state-guaranteed broad access to free medical care and the insufficient funds allocated to health services (Ivanov *et al.* 2006, 421). The responsibility for the provision and funding of health services has devolved from the federal government to the regional and municipal authorities. Health services are financed from two sources: fees paid to the compulsory Medical Insurance Fund and the municipal and regional budgets.[9] As a result, medical services offered to the population differ greatly throughout Russia in terms of both quantity and quality (ibid., 421). The deficiencies in health services are frequently circumvented by relying on various informal practices, such as social networks and unofficial payments (see in more detail Rivkin-Fish 2005; Salmi 2003).

Medical establishments in Russia suffer from an acute lack of resources. Infrastructure is crumbling, medical devices are old, and hospitals have to struggle with problems in communal services, such as breaks in the supply of hot water and heating. Labor welfare also has several shortcomings. For example, in one of the TUHW's presidium meetings, participants discussed how medical staff were exposed to tuberculosis and HIV infection because of the lack of necessary occupational safety measures. In Tver′ people are predominantly dependent on public health services, as there are very few private health services available, owing to a lack of clients with the necessary purchasing power.[10]

Protection and help: the goals of the TUHW

In this section I explore the TUHW's diagnostic and prognostic frames: the problems the group seeks to address; its interpretation of the origins of these problems; and the goals it sets for itself. The goals of the TUHW can be divided into those related to health care as a *branch*, and those related to the *union work*.

In the Soviet Union, the primary goal of the TUHW was to stimulate production and to fulfil the five-year-plan by practising socialist competition

(*sotsialisticheskoe sorevnovanie*).[11] The TUHW's goals have changed with the transition process and its main goals regarding the field of health care are now the protection of workers' interests and socio-economic rights, enlightening workers about their rights and how to defend them, and helping and supporting workers economically, emotionally and morally. The words 'protection' (*zashchita*) and 'help' (*pomoshch'*) were frequently reiterated in the activists' interviews. What is noteworthy is that the TUHW, owing to its branch-based organization mode, does not set itself a goal of protecting *professional* interests.

NINA PETROVNA: Well, the main goal is to protect (*zashchitit'*) people. Besides, probably to explain (*raz''iasnit'*) to them certain principles. Because people may not understand the meaning of the laws, so one has to explain those laws to people and provide them with some legal education. (…) I mean, to help (*pomoch'*) them to get adapted in the right way to the employer and the collective. (…) To make it clear for the people that nowadays the trade union is still an organization and solidarity will empower them (*v splochennosti sila*). As an individual you will never ever do anything, you are incapable of defending your interests. There should be an organization that can protect and support (*podderzhat'*) you when you are in trouble. (…) People just need some kind of psychological support and help. (…) I would like to help people because nowadays the vast majority of people are illiterate when it comes to legislation. (…) People don't know how to defend their interests in the right way. (…) And who else would give them a piece of advice for free? A visit to a solicitor is very expensive. (…) So I myself, for instance, would like to help them. (*obkom* legal adviser)

The union activists identified the very low salaries and their occasional non-payment as the biggest problem in the branch, and overcoming these problems was the central goal of the TUHW. Salary is a new problem, as in the Soviet Union, according to the interviewees, salaries, although they were low, were paid on time and were sufficient for a decent standard of living. The diagnostic frame in the TUHW constructs the transformation process of the 1990s as the source of workers' oppression and problems. The interviewees saw the transformation as having engendered instability and destitution and having dismantled their rights. Galina Leonidovna considered that low salaries lead workers to receive unofficial payments, which erode the altruistic ethos of medical work:[12]

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: Medical workers are embittered because they are paid no attention and live in poverty. That's why medical workers accept money, no one would refuse any more, while before it was considered shameful (*pozor*). (…) I even stopped visiting my colleagues who are treated in our hospital, (…) [because] I'm embarrassed. I feel ashamed

for my colleagues, but at the same time I can't blame them (*ne mogu osudit'*).

The majority of TUHW activists saw that as a result of the demise of the Soviet Party structure, trade unions are the only civic organizations that have been left to protect workers. Here the verb 'remain' (*ostat'sia*) was often repeated. In this way, TUHW activists construct continuity between the past and present:

ANDREI PAVLOVICH: It [the trade union] still remains (*ostalas'*) the biggest civic organization (*obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*) at the moment. The Party organizations don't exist any more. (…) Now, generally speaking, we are the only central societal (*obshchestvennoe*) section left, there are no alternatives to us among civic organizations. (*profkom* president)

ALEKSANDRA ALEKSEEVNA: Now (…) the only defender (*zashchitnik*) is trade unions. (…) all protest campaigns and so on are organized only by trade unions, nobody else does it. There are basically no other civic organizations acting on behalf of the working population (…). (*profkom* president)

As regards problems and goals related to union work, the interviewees raised the declining membership rate and non-mobilization of members as the main problem. Union members were portrayed as passive: a small group of *aktiv*, mainly those involved in *profkomy*, were said to participate actively, while the rest only pay dues. This non-mobilization does not affect only the TUHW, but plagues the Russian trade union movement, in general. For example, the FNPR has frequently criticized regional union organizations for their inability to activate their membership (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 264). TUHW activists offered several explanations for this (alleged) passivity among workers and the declining unionization rate. First, because membership is voluntary, people do not participate in the Union as widely as they used to. Second, it is difficult to find new *profkom* presidents, because no one is interested in volunteer work on top of their normal workload. Third, non-mobilization was also explained by a 'Russian mentality' and distrust felt towards the unions:[13]

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: A very big difficulty here is that people aren't active. Whether it's our mentality (*mentalitet*), that people are very patient, so they say, or it's the lack of trust in either authorities or, perhaps, in trade unions. Saying they aren't able to keep it up. Let somebody go out to the streets (…), but without me. That's something we really dislike – that our people are like this – silent. (…) unfortunately, our people, I think, are very passive, very passive. (…) We are not satisfied when we hear from people: "Ah, those trade unions, what can they give me!"

(…). People are becoming indifferent. It doesn't depend on us [trade unions], the way of our life, in general, has turned to be like that. (…) There's no real faith in any societal institutions (…) in trade unions, too, unfortunately. Because they say: "What can you do?" Though we do a lot, well, in our opinion. People aren't aware of many things that we do. We aren't able to bring this information to people, it's also both our trouble and our fault.

The mentality explanation externalizes the problem of passivity and does not construe it, for example, as a result of the TUHW's failure to mobilize its members. Galina Leonidovna understands the distrust of trade unions to depend not so much on the actions of the unions, but rather on a general 'institutional distrust' prevailing in Russian society. However, later in the quote she does self-critically consider the possibility that the trade unions have not been able to make their achievements known among their members and the general public. *Profkom* president Svetlana Denisovna interpreted this distrust for trade unions and passivity of members to stem from trade unions' inability to offer as much protection as before: "Before people used to trust trade unions and the unions could always achieve certain results. But now rather different problems have emerged. Sometimes trade unions can't solve a certain problem thoroughly (*korennym obrazom*). That's why some sort of distrust may have appeared." Another *profkom* president illustrated distrust felt towards the unions as follows:

ANNA NIKOLAEVNA: I recently had a jubilee party and we were sitting here celebrating and there was one friend of ours there, he's head of the surgical department, he's a very nice man and a highly qualified surgeon; he said to me: "Anna Nikolaevna, I would like to tell you that I'm a trade union member only because you are there. I'll leave the trade union as soon as you leave. Your Shmakov [the FNPR leader], he's a jerk (*siakoi*), he's impudent, he doesn't protect us at all." And I reply: "What are you talking about? How come we don't protect you?" And he says: "Then tell me – there's no hot water in Tver′ now. What did you [trade union leaders] do about that? (…) What did you do about our miserable salaries?" And I say: "We keep fighting and your wages are constantly increasing". And he says: "Do you call it an increase, those 10 or 20 per cent?" So, actually, it was very difficult for me to (…) oppose him, because, generally speaking, he's certainly right.

This quote reveals how members tend to expect the Union to offer them extensive protection in problems of everyday life similar to those in the Soviet Union, covering even the supply of communal services. Anna Nikolaevna reluctantly admits that the Union's ability to provide the workers with this type of extensive support is today highly constrained. With the

transition to the market economy, the TUHW's role has significantly chan-
ged and it cannot influence workers' social welfare in the market economy
in the way it could in the planned economy.

TUHW interviewees also explained workers' passivity as stemming from
the volatile situation in the labor market and the legislative changes, in
particular to the Labor Code and the Law on Trade Unions, which were
said to have given extensive powers to management at the expense of
workers.[14] For example, according to the old Labor Code, the management
was obliged to consult the trade union in the case of making a worker
redundant or in the enforcement of punitive measures, but the new Code
does not require this procedure. The *Obkom*'s legal adviser complained that
union members are not usually willing to act themselves, but instead expect
the *obkom* and union activists to do the work. Workers are afraid of
defending their rights vis-à-vis the employer, because they fear they will lose
their jobs. The legal adviser sighed in the interview:"Sometimes this pas-
siveness of our people is simply killing me."

The free-rider phenomenon was also identified as a source of the shrink-
ing unionization rate. The fact that non-members benefit from the
improvements the TUHW manages to win was perceived as discouraging
participation. Galina Leonidovna complained:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: If we accomplish [benefits] for the members of the
    trade union, those who are not members automatically receive the same
    benefits. (…) There is very little difference between those who are trade
    union members and those who are not. We can provide material sup-
    port from our resources [only to union members]. (…) Only this finan-
    cial support makes a difference (…). That's why people think: why
    should I pay the membership fees, if I will get the same benefits as those
    who are not members of the trade union?

Against this background it is interesting that the interviewed activists
reported that the TUHW does not actively recruit new members. This
means that the workers' alleged passivity is not to be overcome by actively
organizing campaigns and attracting workers to join the TUHW. The
reluctance to campaign presumably stems from the TUHW's wish to dis-
tance itself from the Soviet tradition of obligatory union membership.

ALLA SERGEEVNA: You know, it's not as if people must do something. Never.
    If **they** are really interested they will participate [in the TUHW], if they
    are not – they will not. (…) And we do not press them to come here [to
    the union]. If they think they need it, they come to us and unionize.
    (…) everyone makes such a decision themselves. (*profkom* president)

KATIA: How do you usually recruit new members to the trade union? Do
    they come on their own or do you organize some events … ?

ANDREI PAVLOVICH: We do not campaign for that (*agitatsei my ne zanimaemsia*). If a person wants to leave the trade union it's obvious that he's already thought it out (…). And besides, (…) when a new worker arrives, he does not ask how he would benefit from membership in the trade union. He may unconsciously know what he can expect (…). (*profkom* president)

Given the workers' non-mobilization, how did the interviewed activists then explain their own participation in the TUHW? What motivates their participation? Some activists explained their activism by their 'active character'.[15] A number of activists referred to their wish to help workers and protect their interests and rights, or to participation by habit. Many also emphasized the services the Union provides, although to a more limited degree than during the Soviet era. Some interviewees pointed out that although the Union is weaker than in the Soviet era, it is still better to have some sort of support than of being left without any protection.

Negotiating occupational ethos and collective: morality, *dusha* and generation

The diagnostic and prognostic frames of the TUHW are articulated particularly vividly in the context of the redefinition of occupational ethos and identity. Here trade union and occupational identities are interwoven; changes in occupational ethos affect both work practices and trade union activities. TUHW members narrated the change in the occupational ethos as part of a larger change in moral codes and value systems, that is, the disintegration of the Communist morality as a result of the social transformation.[16] The ethos that has traditionally characterized medical work is, according to TUHW members, based on vocation and a deep sense of dedication. Medical workers were ascribed attributes that characterize the typical idealized *Homo Sovieticus*: they work conscientiously, selflessly and with enthusiasm for the benefit of their fellow-citizens and society and they are responsible and compassionate.[17] Galina Leonidovna recalled in her interview how in the beginning of the 1990s, doctors brought vegetables from their dachas when hospitals ran out of food, simply because they felt it was their duty to take care of their patients. In this way, medical workers are construed as servants of the people and society, which can be seen as a way to generate value for their work that is not monetarily appreciated in society. One *profkom* president also explained that the TUHW is regarded as a strong union because "we have exclusively conscientious (*dobrosovestnye*) people [in the Union], people with enthusiasm, people who love their work".

This type of altruistic and vocation-based occupational ethos was, however, perceived as being under threat today. Here generation emerged as a central articulating principle. In this context, discourses on Russianness –

'us' as a national collectivity – intertwine with discourses on 'us' as health care workers.[18] Galina Leonidovna articulated the change in occupational ethos as follows:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: It's the old people [in the health care sector] who have taken the Hippocratic oath, they are selfless (*samootverzhennye*). They work for the people. We are running out of such patriots. They are getting older and leaving our field for good. Young people come instead. (…) Young people are more practical, they are more realistic, one can even say that they don't have such ideals any more. If I work I should be paid decently for my job. So the enthusiasm is dying out. These young people come and the attitude toward patients becomes totally different. (…) We got used to the situation when the patient was always right. (…) And now (…) it turns out to be like this: the more one pays the better treatment one gets (*kak platit', tak i lechim*). (…) Totally different values. We are afraid that although our field is supposed to be very humane, it will eventually lose its humanism (…). The approach is already like that of industry. If you pay me – I will cure you, if not – forget it. I mean, even the value of human life seems to decrease. (…) Before (…) chocolate candies, flowers, cognac – it was regarded as a bribe (*vziatka*). And now it is seen from a different perspective – the operations are paid, if you pay, they will do it. (…) But the moral attitude to a human being is totally different. (…) As for my generation, everything we experienced was marvellous. We had a hard life but we had moral values. And now (…) people have become hardhearted, callous and reserved. These are certainly great losses for our society. (…) We now have this indifference. (…) the medical people always got very small salaries but they were brought up in a different way and the old generation grieved about their job (*bolelo dushoi*). (…) people used to put heart and soul (*dusha*) into their work (…), and in my opinion, it meant a lot.

This quote is filled with powerful feelings of fear, sorrow and humiliation. The changing value system and moral order in society that are reflected in the attitudes of medical workers to their work and patients are interpreted as being at the heart of the change of the occupational ethos. The vocation-based ethos is withering away. Galina Leonidovna describes the elder (Soviet) practitioners as altruistic. They pursue the common good, they are patriots who work on the basis of the Hippocratic Oath, they are idealistic, regard their duties with enthusiasm, have moral values and *dusha* (soul, heart), and make medicine a humane field. By contrast, the younger generation of medical workers is characterized as practically and realistically oriented and salary-driven; they treat patients according to their capacity to pay. They regard informal payments as a normal extra in their salary and turn the humane sector into an industry-like activity. Galina Leonidovna is

concerned for the withering of the egalitarian principle of welfare provision; the right to medical treatment ceases to be universal and rather depends upon capacity to pay.[19]

   Dusha and devotion were perceived as important qualities not only in medical but also in trade union work. Interestingly, instead of advocating collective action against the illegal informal payments in health care required by medical workers, Galina Leonidovna called for more *dusha* in union and medical work.

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: We think that if a good and interested person grieves (*dusha boleet*) about what s/he's doing, if s/he's working hard, then the work [in the trade union] will go well. And when it's only nominal, let's say, s/he was elected [as a *profkom* president] just because I didn't want to do this job – then s/he will hardly work and put her/his heart and soul into work. Again, we come back to the soul (*dusha*), you see. Soul should be there all the time.

Morals and *dusha* function in Galina Leonidovna's narrative as central signifiers of the occupational ethos and trade union work. They also traditionally have been portrayed as central defining elements of Russianness. The high value attached to morality is, I suggest, linked with the Slavophile discourses of Russianness (see Hellberg-Hirn 1998, 168ff.) that celebrate the moral superiority of Russians compared to the West, and with the representation of the Soviet state as being built on a distinctive moral order, Communist morality, which was a pertinent feature of the ideological project of constructing *Homo Sovieticus*. Katherine Verdery (1996, 16) has written how socialist societies created a conception of a 'socialist nation' that was primarily based on a *moral* tie between the state and its citizens. This construction of a moral state, and of Soviet/Russian people as morally superior in comparison to the West, circulates the historically durable discursive juxtaposition between the "immoral and material Western civilization and Western soul destroyed by materialism, mechanization, and rationalization" vs. the "moral and spiritual Russia" (Pesmen 2000, 182; see also Hellberg-Hirn 1998). Hann (2002) has also noted how the contemplation of morality often comes to the fore when people in post-socialist societies reflect upon their lives. The redefinition of everyday morality can undoubtedly be seen as one of the most fundamental changes that have taken place in post-socialist societies. Since the distinctive Communist morality was so integral part of the Communist project, it is precisely morality and moral subjecthood that are also at stake in the negotiation of the occupational ethos in the TUHW. Pesmen (2000, 182) observes in her study how her informants employed the myth of the Russian soul in making sense of social upheavals. In a similar vein we can see Galina Leonidovna negotiating interconnections between Russianness, generation and occupational ethos with the notions of *dusha* and morality.

Generation also emerged as a central factor in collective identity formation in the TUHW in another way. The 'we' construed in the TUHW activists' interviews is the elder, Soviet generation. Several activists, when they described the Union's activities, told how the 'old cadres' (*starye kadry*) and the 'old core group' (*staryi kostiak*) stay in the Union, while young workers do not join it any more. The union has had great difficulties in mobilizing young workers, as evidenced by the statistics: only 18 percent of the TUHW members are under thirty-five years old. The *obkom* president contemplated this as follows:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: The young people don't really feel like doing this [union work]. (…) young people regard it more skeptically. (…) "Why should I do that?" they say. We still rely on old cadres. But (…) taking into account our age, we'll leave and there are not so many young people who will replace us. We don't know what to do next, our task is to prepare successors, of course, we would like to recruit them from the young people … (…) many of our doctors (…) work as volunteers (*na obshchestvennykh nachalakh*), head the trade union organizations. (…) She [one *profkom* president] has been a chairperson of the trade union committee for years. And she does not quit. She has been accustomed to it and people have got accustomed to her, they keep electing her to this position. Why is she doing it, one could ask. (…) She just can't live without it. And we have many people like her, woman activists.

Galina Leonidovna describes the elder generation, in particular women, as continuing to participate in the Union, because they cannot live in any other way: union work is so central a part of their life practices and self-identity. One of the *profkom* presidents also sighed: "The elder people don't leave the trade union, in spite of the fact that they seem not to need anything from us any more." Arguably the ethos based on Communist morality that the TUHW wishes to preserve is not necessarily such that would speak to the younger practitioners and attract them to join the Union. Instead of changing the ideological and organizational underpinnings of the TUHW's work, which could be one option to attract young members, the TUHW tends to look at the older activists and seek to preserve their activism.

Youth in the TUHW was, for the most part, signified in an opposite way than in the CGS. In the CGS, youth was portrayed as the hope for the future, while in the TUHW youth was often signified as a threat: it threatens to dismantle the Communist morality upon which the ethos of the TUHW and medical work is based. Youth was seen as not sharing the same moral order upon which the TUHW's work relies (cf. Ashwin 1999, 56). The *obkom* legal adviser, however, portrayed the younger generation in a different light from other TUHW activists, echoing the articulations of the CGS. She portrayed the youth as active and having self-respect; they do not

submit to the injustices they face in working life as the elder generation tends to do, but are more willing to defend themselves:

NINA PETROVNA: We have the lowest rate of carrying on a lawsuit (*obrashchaemost' v sud*). (…) The young people (…) may begin to do something about that. They will slam the door, they will quit, they will write down a letter of resignation or go to court. The middle-aged people simply don't want anything. (…) they stay quiet in order to avoid problems. (…) As for the young people, I think that [when] we'll leave [on pension], the highly qualified lawyers and economists will not agree to work for such a small salary. (…) At least, we are a different generation, the young people do value themselves (…). Perhaps, one should know how to present oneself and not to work for nothing.

In addition to *dusha* and morality, collectivism also emerged as a central dimension of the diagnostic and prognostic frames of the TUHW. Union members portrayed as the goal of the Union the cultivation of a sense of communality and functioning as a counterforce to the increasing individualization in society. They often reiterated how today everybody struggles alone. They portrayed Russians as collective-minded people and as being used to collectivist practices, which entails that they suffer from the individualization process. They saw media and the government as threatening the collectivistic ethos, and thus the Russian mentality, in general:

ANNA NIKOLAEVNA: Of course, (…) the sense of collectivism is quite developed among us, although now it's coming to naught. However, generally speaking, we're very collective-minded people.
VERA BORISOVNA: Nowadays everyone is more on their own (*sam po sebe*).
ANNA NIKOLAEVNA: We are very … we are not on our own.
GALINA LEONIDOVNA: I have already told you that we still have the Russian mentality (*mentalitet russkogo cheloveka*) because we'll still try to help each other. (…) We still have this feeling. However, the mass media and our government are doing their best to get us separated (*razobshchalis'*) …
ANNA NIKOLAEVNA: /Everyone is against it, is against people being separated. (…)
GALINA LEONIDOVNA: /We try to resist (*soprotivliaemsia*) it. (…) They say that we have perestroika (…). May be, something should have been changed but not (…) that radically. (…) because deep in our hearts (*v dushe*) we are still the same as we used to be while they are imposing completely new frames on us. These frames are even morally unnatural for us (*moral'no protivoestestvenny*). (…) It's frightening that nowadays everyone has to rely only on his/herself. (…) When you see that no one cares about others (…). This is (…) unnatural for our nation (*natsiia*). (…) So everyone tries to go into his/her own shell and at the same time longs

for communication (*obshchenie*). Our Russian soul (*dusha russkaia*) is open-hearted and we have not got accustomed to being alone. (…) And we are now being pushed to totally change our mentality. To change the historically conditioned features of our character. It seems to me that deep in our hearts (*v dushe*) we are struggling with ourselves. On the one hand they impose these new ideas on us, on the other hand, our bodies and souls resist it. (…) but we must hold on (…) and not to yield to all this.

The interviewees regard the attempts to dismantle collectivism as engendering a new selfish and individual-centred moral order that is 'unnatural' for Russians. The fact that TUHW members' interviews include much talk about Russianness and mentality in the context of union activities indicates how closely the redefinition of the identity of the TUHW is intertwined with that of national identity. TUHW activists voice the difficulty of adapting to the new moral order. Whereas in the CGS, the construction of a new citizen-subject was positioned as a desired goal, TUHW activists wish to preserve *Homo Sovieticus* and the traditional features attached to Russianness.

Forms of activity: continuities and breaks

How does the TUHW seek to achieve its aims? TUHW interviewees outlined a division of labor between primary organizations and *obkom*. *Obkom* is to create and maintain contacts with legislative and executive powers, whilst primary organizations focus on organizing union work in medical establishments and dealing with the hospital management. Although the goals of the TUHW have somewhat changed from Soviet to post-Soviet Russia, it has plenty of continuities at the level of organizational practices. Since the Tver′ TUHW does not collaborate with international partners and its horizontal relationships include primarily other traditional trade unions, it is not particularly susceptible to the influence of new forms of activity. The continuities from the past are manifested in the TUHW, for example, in the planning of work, the importance of social and cultural activities, and the organization of presidium meetings. The most significant change is the organization of public protests, such as pickets and demonstrations, which were not possible in the Soviet Union.

   The functions of the TUHW have narrowed since the Soviet era, when the unions used to take care of a wide range of issues. A number of tasks, most notably industrial safety and administration of the Social Insurance Fund, have been shifted to governmental bodies (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 42). Galina Leonidovna did not welcome this narrowing of the unions' scope of activity, because in her view the state cannot properly manage these tasks. According to her, Soviet trade unions "did a great job" and she did not critically discuss the constraints of union work in the Soviet Union.

The majority of the interviewed TUHW activists did not criticize Soviet trade unions and thought that they worked better than the TUHW today.

The planning of union work is still regarded as important in the TUHW. For example, the *obkom* office prepares a plan of activities for the Union and in this plan, several items are marked with the phrase 'according to the plan' (*po planu*), echoing the Soviet planning rhetoric. Galina Leonidovna posited Soviet organizational work (*orgrabota*) as a good model for contemporary union work. In her view, the trade unions differ from other organizations, because "we still have this sense of organizational work, we still plan our work. No one else seems to have it anymore".

Legislation is an important tool for both the *obkom* and primary organizations in defending the workers' rights.[20] *Obkom* legal adviser offers free legal consultation to union members, and this was often mentioned in the interviews as an important motive for workers to join the Union. The centrality of legislation in the activities of the TUHW, and Russian trade unions in general, has been referred to as a 'lawbook approach', which has meant an individualistic, bureaucratic and technical approach to rights protection. Trade union committees usually intercede with management on behalf of individual workers, or take conflicts through the procedure for resolving individual labor disputes, rather than encouraging collective action or allowing a collective labor dispute to arise (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 263). This has undermined collective mobilization in the workplaces.

The TUHW favors collaborative tactics in its activities. The *obkom* staff negotiates with the authorities about various workers' socio-economic rights. The primary organizations perform cultural activities and social welfare functions in close collaboration with the management. However, unlike the CGS and many other civic organizations in Tver′, the TUHW also engages in contentious action in the form of demonstrations and other public protests, although this contentious aspect does not play as a significant role as the collaborative tactics. TUHW activists complained that union members are very reluctant to engage in contentious action. As one of the *profkom* presidents commented, "people express their resentment [but] when it's time to articulate demands, to present the claims, suddenly the number of the people considerably decreases. (…) As a rule, only a few people are ready to do it."

Demonstrations organized by trade unions have tended to be more symbolic in nature in Russia: they are 'ritual display' and a way to allow activists to let off steam rather than putting effective pressure on the government (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 71). The Central Organization of the Russian Trade Unions, FNPR, has been reluctant to organize public protests, because it has been afraid that they do not attract enough participants, which could be interpreted as a sign of weakness, undermining the FNPR's position vis-à-vis the state. Moreover, the FNPR has also perceived demonstrations as an ineffective means in pushing the government to make concessions. The traditional May Day demonstration in Tver′ in 2004

illustrates well the symbolic nature of demonstrations. This demonstration was initiated by the Communist Party and trade unions, but it was organized together with the authorities. Organization of this demonstration was described as a duty of the authorities:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: There was a demonstration on May 1. The administration organized it, but first it was us [trade unions] and the Communist Party who submitted the application. Then we started arguing that it was a national holiday (…), so why was the state evading this holiday? In fact, it's the administration's duty to organize it, and our task is to support it. Well, we did persuade the Mayor somehow, and people were immediately ordered (*v prikaznom poriadke*) to go, the leaders were to be there (…), and the demonstration was quite big. And people gladly, although by order, came to the demonstration because [of] socializing (*obshchenie*) … people are tired of loneliness.

Demonstration is not understood in this context as a protest against some experienced injustice or a way to make claims to the powers-that-be, but as a form of *obshchenie*.[21] It is also interesting that people are apparently still ordered to attend demonstrations in the same way as in the Soviet Union. Galina Leonidovna interprets that despite the forced nature of participation, union members participate with delight, because they miss interaction. Thus, contentious action in the TUHW is understood as serving the function of creating communality and not (at least primarily) as being about pressuring the powers-that-be.

Strikes as a contentious strategy do not belong to the repertoire of the TUHW because of the specific moral and altruistic nature of medical work. The activists said that they cannot go into strike, because they have a moral obligation toward their patients. Galina Leonidovna explained this as follows: "Our doctors are very conservative-minded. They have a small salary but they still keep working. Those who deal with children, how can they leave them? They just can't go on strike, because you just can't leave children."[22] The activists also felt that the authorities count on this altruism of medical workers as inhibiting their contentious action, which means that they do not listen to the claims of the TUHW as much as, for example, those of the teachers' union.

Presidium meetings – meetings of the TUHW executive committee – are a form of activity that bring together the *profkom* presidents, *obkom* staff and other union activists. Representatives of the authorities administering health care in the city and region also often attend the meetings. The presidium meetings serve, according to Galina Leonidovna, as a body of collective decision-making, which she regarded as a continuation of the Soviet past. Thus, meetings are seen as a way to preserve the collectivist practices in the TUHW. However, according to our observations, the presidium meetings functioned as a forum of information exchange, rather than a decision-making

arena. The meetings often consisted of reports. Depending on the topic discussed, people were invited to deliver presentations and the *obkom* staff reported about their activities and distributed information from the Central Committee, the FNPR, and the meetings and conferences they had attended. There was rather little discussion in the meetings, and usually the discussion took place between the members of the executive committee; the rank-and-file members asked few, in any, questions. This gave an impression of unilateral interaction. We also noticed that the meetings concentrated on voicing problems, but measures for solving these problems were little discussed.

In the presidium meetings, salary and related socio-economic issues and daily life problems were to the fore. Discussion of professional issues was scarce, which highlights the fact that questions of professional practices and qualifications are not understood as belonging to the TUHW's agenda. In addition to salary, the meetings discussed, among other issues, the Labor Code, conditions of employment, recruitment of workers and their high turnover, occupational safety and health, preparations for the winter season in medical schools and summer camps for children. Also great differences in medical establishments between different localities in the region were discussed.[23]

During the Soviet era, trade unions administered a wide array of social, cultural and everyday life services and benefits ('*sotskul'tbyt'*). Although these services and benefits have notably declined with the transition, the activities of the TUHW primary organizations still mainly revolve around these issues. The social and cultural functions were from the perspective of employees the most important tasks of the Soviet trade unions (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 20–22), and they are very important also today, as a number of interviewed activists mentioned them as reasons for joining the TUHW.

Primary organizations organize various cultural and moral upbringing activities (*kul'turno-vospitatel'naia rabota*) and administer and deliver services and benefits. *Profkomy* distribute material assistance to union members and give support for their health resort trips and children's holiday camps, although the main bulk of these costs nowadays have to be covered by the workers themselves. Children's holidays were viewed in the interviews as a highly important aspect of union work. *Profkomy* also organize cultural events for workers and their families, for example for International Women's Day and New Year's, and organize excursions and choirs and various educational courses. *Profkomy* and the *obkom* organize together various contests, such as a contest for choral singing and professional excellence. Various professional holidays are also celebrated, for example, the Day of Medical Workers, and exemplary workers are awarded certificates of honor.

Although the interviewed activists identified as the main goal of the TUHW the protection of the rights and interests of *workers*, in the concrete activities of primary organizations the activities are oriented not only to workers but, as the examples above show, also, very importantly, to workers' *families*. The TUHW continues to conceive of its constituency in a very

comprehensive way reminiscent of the Soviet era. Work targeted at workers' children forms a substantial share of the cultural activities in the primary organizations, as in the Soviet Union. This was manifested in the fact that a number of the TUHW's activists talked at length about these activities in their interviews.

There seems to be a contradiction between the goals and the means to achieve them in primary-level activities: although salaries are identified as the main problem and raising them as the main goal, the activities of primary organizations do not really address this issue. This can partly be interpreted as stemming from the division of labor within the TUHW, that is, the *obkom* pushes the salary question in its interaction with the authorities. However, the fact that primary organizations do not directly tackle the issue of salary entails that trade union members cannot do much at the workplace level to improve their socio-economic situation. This can create a sense of lack of efficacy and alienate workers from the Union. The hierarchical structure and working methods in trade unions entail that trade union leaders tend to have weak links to rank-and-file members and there is little reciprocal exchange of information between the two. This leads to the situation in which the trade union leaders, negotiating employment issues with the authorities, do not necessarily enjoy support at the grassroots and cannot effectively, even if they want to, defend workers' interests (Peschanskii 1998, 88).[24]

When interviewing *profkom* presidents I found it difficult at first to understand why they talked at length about these cultural activities and activities targeted for children. I often felt that "well, okay, but tell me something about the real union activities", until I realized that these were, indeed, the *real* and central activities. My initial assumption was that the work of the *profkomy* would be somehow targeted at labor issues and advocacy of employment rights. However, for the primary organizations in the TUHW and Russian trade unions in general *sociability*, rather than the furtherance of professional interests, is characteristic (cf. Ashwin 1999, 146–50; Alapuro and Lonkila 2000, 128). The popularity of cultural activities stems, on the one hand, from the fact that they are familiar forms of activity from the Soviet period. On the other hand, primary organizations may also focus on them because many of the TUHW's previous functions have been transferred to governmental bodies, and the legislation has also limited the rights of trade unions vis-à-vis the management. Cultural activities emerge as a feasible form of action in which the primary organizations can still engage. The *Obkom* legal adviser critically contemplated this issue. In her view, emphasis on cultural work is beneficial for the employers as it makes the Union 'harmless':

> I don't like it that our rights are infringed upon in the 'Law on Trade Unions' [and] in the new Labor Code. I don't like it that managers try to expel us from professional activities. They'd like to bind us solely to

this kind of mass-cultural (*kul'tmassovaia*) [work]. They try to take all key decisions for the institution themselves and keep the trade union out of it.

However, the focus on cultural activities can also be interpreted from another angle. Cultural activities become meaningful if we understand them as a way to engender emotional capital: to connect members to the union with moral and emotional ties instead of only instrumental ties, in order to receive certain benefits and services. This emotional capital could help revive and sustain solidarity and the collectivist ethos at a time when the Soviet terrain of collectives is disintegrating and society is interpreted as becoming more individualized. Emotions and communality were frequently alluded to when the activists talked about the cultural activities of the TUHW:

SVETLANA DENISOVNA: I'm now trying to organize cultural and educational events and excursions. We went to the Bolshoi Theatre several times, we went to Leningrad (sic), we went to Moscow. (…) I believe that this cultural and educational work is also important. For a certain period of time we just forgot about these things. (…) All these excursions and amateur performances (*samodeiatel'nost'*) bring people together. People have lately become a bit aggressive (…). When doing these things together people socialize (*obshchaiutsia*) with each other and raise their emotional vigor. And the emotional vigor means a positive micro-climate in the family and at work. (*profkom* president)

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: We organized a party for them [veterans] on the first [of October][25] (…). We try not to forget about these things, but these are the remnants (*ostatki*) of our former [life], old traditions. But we are afraid that it will all be destroyed. However, we are still clinging to it, [to everything that] is dear and important to us (…). We recently held an amateur contest (…). We'll organize the same kind of event on the Women's Day. People still have that feeling of collectivism and they miss the meetings that they used to have (…). (…) they miss this socializing (*obshchenie*). (…) This is what the role of trade unions is about – to bring people together (*splachivat' liudei*). We are already returning to our old [traditions], for instance, organization of sport events and various celebrations. (…) Because we have realized that it's much harder to handle the current situation if you're alone. That's why the trade union unites (*ob''ediniaet*) people. (…) there's also a certain nostalgia when we hold these contests (…). People participate in them with great pleasure. Just because for our Russian (*russkie*) people it's like a universal panacea, to participate in some kind of activities … In Russia it has always been like that – people are singing and dancing no matter how hard their life is.

The interviewees refer to 'going back to traditions': they look back to the Soviet forms of activity and return to them, because members miss them.[26] Excursions, amateur performances, tea parties, and contests that offer an opportunity for socializing are regarded as creating communality. The quotes portray the TUHW as a site of emotional support and sociability. Galina Leonidovna outlines the main task of the trade union as being to 'bring people together'. Although she earlier explained the passivity of union members as being connected with 'Russian mentality', she here sees this mentality also as facilitating participation. She portrays union members as Russians, as people who regard sociability and togetherness as a panacea for everything.

We can approach these cultural activities organized in the TUHW as an attempt to create emotional capital, and through that, commitment, trust and solidarity. Political capital had a tremendous role in the TUHW during the Soviet era. A trade union career was not considered prestigious, but it did offer political capital and several privileges, functioning as an incentive for participation. With the demise of the party structure, the unions have ceased to be an arena of accumulation and conversion of political capital. Trade unions and hospitals have not been proved as effective in accumulating and converting political capital as have universities and new civic organizations that seek foreign support. The TUHW does not offer economic capital in the same way as, for example, the CGS, as the majority of *profkom* presidents are volunteers and the salaries are low in the *obkom* office. The symbolic capital attached to medical work has also significantly eroded in post-Soviet society. The emotional capital created through cultural activities could potentially be translated into economic capital. Linking people emotionally to the TUHW could engender solidarity and a sense of efficacy, which could, in turn, increase activism and willingness for collective action and provide the TUHW with a better negotiation position vis-à-vis the employer/state. However, from the interviews and observation in the TUHW it seems that cultural activities have not been able to engender significantly more active participation in the Union. Cultural activities can potentially engender emotional commitment to the *workplace* and its members, but not to the *trade union as a political movement*. Communality at the workplace does not readily transform into political mobilization for improving working conditions. In order for the emotional commitment to develop for the Union as a political movement, a sense of collective identity would need to be created. I now turn to explore why this sense of we-ness has not developed in the TUHW.

We as *narod*: the all-inclusive membership

The self-identity frame of the TUHW is constructed upon an all-inclusive membership and association with the people (*narod*), which is also the key to understanding the weakness of collective mobilization in the TUHW. The

TUHW has an extremely heterogeneous membership, including everyone employed in the health care sector. The TUHW membership also includes the employers and officials administering health care in the regional and municipal administrations. Because of this all-inclusive nature of the TUHW's membership the boundary between the state and the trade union and between the worker and the employer is blurred. The TUHW lacks an independent position and is, as in the Soviet era, deeply dependent on and embedded in the management and the governmental structures. In budget sector unions such as the TUHW, the category of employer is problematic and artificial: the state is an employer represented by chief doctors in medical establishments, but these chief doctors are simultaneously both employers with regard to their health care establishments and employees of the state (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 84). They are also frequently members of the trade union. One *profkom* president pointed to this confusing position of the employer in her interview: "The employer has a municipal hospital, he has not bought it, yet, but he already behaves like an owner."

The problems stemming from the all-inclusive membership are particularly evident in the context of social partnership (*sotsial'noe partnerstvo*). Social partnership is a discourse and a set of practices that emerged in Russia in the 1990s and has been considerably influenced by social dialogue, a practice promoted by the International Labor Organization (ILO).[27] It refers to collective tripartite agreements (*kollektivnye dogovory*) between the state, employers and employees, and aims at social peace with an emphasis on negotiation and collaboration instead of confrontation (Ashwin and Clarke 2003). Social partnership is a key element of the state-led corporatist framework regulating labor relations in Russia. According to Ashwin and Clarke (ibid.) social partnership has achieved considerable popularity in the FNPR as a way to rethink the relationship between the state and trade unions in the post-Soviet era. Social partnership has offered unions a framework with which they have tried to regain their authority and a recognized and legitimate position as a representative of the employed population in the eyes of the state. Several scholars (Ashwin and Clarke 2003; Peregudov 1998; Rogova 1998) have, however, criticized social partnership for its formal and ineffective nature.

The social partnership framework is highly problematic in the context of the health care sector. The TUHW represents all the three partners involved in the social partnership arrangement – employees, employers and health care administrators – that, in effect, waters down the whole partnership constellation. It is unclear whose interests the TUHW pursues and how it could possibly take into account the potentially conflicting and contradictory interests of workers, employees and authorities. For example, how can the *profkom* defend an individual worker and a member of the TUHW in a case of a labor dispute against another Union member, a chief doctor as an employer? Furthermore, in concluding collective agreements, the TUHW represents workers, but it concludes the agreement with (potentially) its

other members, the employers. This undermines the Union's position as a representative of the workers and increases its dependency on the state/employer. Although the FNPR leadership has viewed social partnership as a break from Soviet labor relations, because it, in its view, emphasizes equality between the partners, in reality the three partners do not meet as equal and independent partners. Thus, social partnership fosters close collaboration and paternalist corporatist arrangements between workers and the employer/state in regulating labor relations reminiscent of the Soviet era (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 135). In health care and other budget sectors, local tripartite negotiations are also *de facto* bipartite negotiations between the local government and the union, as the employers, being simultaneously state employees, often tend to ally with the trade unions and do not represent themselves as an independent negotiating party (Peregudov 1998, 60–61). The all-inclusive membership means that the TUHW cannot create collective identity around professional identity or an identity as a 'worker', constructed in relation to the 'management'.[28] Thus TUHW's inability to articulate in a meaningful way who 'we' are and what 'our' interests are results in non-mobilization of members and in the suppression of conflicts in the TUHW.

This being the case, the collective identity that emerges in the TUHW interviews is 'the people', *narod*. *Narod* is not only a name the activists assign to themselves as medical workers and union activists, but it is also construed as the TUHW's constituency. This identification with *narod* and positioning the Union as defending and representing *narod* is a widespread phenomenon in the Russian trade union movement (see Ashwin and Clarke 2003). In addition to *narod*, TUHW activists also identify themselves with such notions as masses (*osnovnaia massa*), ordinary people (*riadovye liudi*) and toilers (*trudaiaschchiisia*). All these identifications imply a class position without power.

Narod denotes an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983); it is a metaphor that does not refer to any clearly defined demographic entity but rather to a mythical group of people (Ries 1997). *Narod* was also one of the key concepts in Soviet political rhetoric. The Soviet party programs and Constitutions made several references to the Soviet *narod*: for example, the Soviet state was defined as the state of all people (*obshchenarodnoe gosudarstvo*) and the CPSU as the vanguard of the people (*avangar vsego naroda*) (Ruutu 2006, 91–104). In Soviet and post-Soviet discourses, *narod* most often refers to the 'common people', socially lower classes, the working people as distinct from the elite, those who have power and wealth (Hellberg-Hirn 1998, 170–73). The *narod* does not hold formal positions of power, but has supreme *moral* power. In pre-revolutionary Russia *narod* referred to the peasantry and proletariat in distinction to the aristocracy and intelligentsia. The populist movement (*narodniki*) in the end of the nineteenth century elevated *narod* to a sacred term, which it continued to be in the Soviet Union. *Narod* often implies 'suffering masses' and 'victimized

people'; it denotes a class of people 'tired of politics, expecting little but the worst from above'. It usually evokes the attributes of brave, simple, modest, honest, all-enduring, and long-suffering. It may also acquire derogative attributes such as backward and uncivilized (Ries 1997, 27–30).

Narod in the TUHW is constructed in relation to *vlast′*, those who have power over, exploit, do not appreciate and take care of the *narod*. This *narod/vlast′* dualism is a culturally and historically pervasive rhetoric with which it is possible to make sense of the experienced oppression and subaltern position of health care workers. The TUHW is defined as speaking for the victimized *narod*. This position of a victim can be seen as an attempt to generate moral value for its bearer, but at the same time it is a subject position that does not afford agency. Usually *vlast′* in the TUHW interviews refers to the state (*gosudarstvo*), federal government (*pravitel′stvo*) and State Duma, occasionally also to the economic elite. By contrast, employers or local administrators of health care are seldom presented as *vlast′*; they are rather construed as allies of the TUHW. This means that *vlast′* is constructed as an elusive entity 'out there', which results in damping down conflicts and confrontation between the employers, the authorities and the TUHW at the local level.

However, *narod* is too loose an identity to instigate workers' collective mobilization. The interviews clearly show that there is a fertile breeding ground for workers' mobilization – feelings of subordination, injustice and disappointment – but the *narod/vlast′* rhetoric cannot frame these feelings in the way that would provide an inspiring vision of how to overcome victimization. Rather, the *narod/vlast′* dualism engenders paralysis, since it represents *narod* as a disempowered object of *vlast′*. The TUHW has not been able to translate the sense of suffering that is embedded in the victimized position of *narod* into agency. By contrast, the Soldiers' Mothers movement also draws on suffering (mothers grieving for their sons), but it has been able to translate suffering into a collective mobilization to stop those forces that create this suffering. The TUHW has not been able to politicize suffering and transform subordination into a politicized sense of oppression.

Against this background, it is interesting that none of the interviewed TUHW activists wished to differentiate their Union along professional lines or exclude the management and health care administrators from the Union. Neither did they perceive differentiation as a potential strategy to increase workers' mobilization and improve the authority of the Union, although differentiation has been discussed in the Union. Some of the activists did nevertheless recognize the problems of the all-inclusive membership. *Profkom* president Alla Sergeevna contended that sometimes conflicts of interest arise in hospitals between nurses and doctors about their different salaries. However, instead of creating separate unions, she saw the solution as dealing separately with nurses and doctors in conflict situations. She also emphasized that "if the head of trade union is a good professional and the

trade union bureau is strong, they can sort things out". *Obkom* president Galina Leonidovna, for her part, thought it was "nonsense" to have employers and employees in the same union, but she was also reluctant to divide the Union:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: I know that in other countries there are separate trade unions for doctors, for middle-ranking personnel (*srednyi personal*) … And we have just one trade union for all [workers] and sometimes there may be a conflict of interests. Because the chief doctors are also members of the trade union, but they are the employers at the same time. Frankly speaking, they shouldn't be members of this trade union (…). And the departments [of health care in the administration], they are also members of the trade union.

SUVI: What do you think, is it better to have unified trade unions or, maybe, separate ones?

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: No, a unified trade union is better (…) because we all have the same employer to whom we have to appeal, (…) and we can resolve our problems with the employer. If there are several trade unions, each will resolve its own problems and defend its specific interests. I mean, we will then confront each other in resolving our problems. Because it's still the same money and the same budget.

The interviewee approaches the TUHW's work not from the viewpoint of those whose *interests* the Union is there to defend, but from the viewpoint of those to whom the Union has to appeal, that is, the state as an employer. Although TUHW activists defined the main goal of the Union as the protection of workers' interests, here the concept of interest is not articulated at all. Galina Leonidovna describes patron–client mechanisms as operating in the Union's interaction with the authorities: all unions appeal to the same 'patron' and compete for scarce resources. She does not envision the possibility of having several professional-based unions, which could then collaborate and together pressure the employers and authorities more effectively. Thus, although it has been suggested that union competition makes the trade union movement stronger, Galina Leonidovna does not see advantages in competition.

To separate the TUHW along professional lines was also seen as unnecessary because there is no sense of 'we-ness' to be found among doctors. This stems from the creation of a complicated system of 'specialists' (*spetsialisty*) and a hierarchy between different medical practitioners in the Soviet Union:

ANDREI PAVLOVICH: Five years ago there was an attempt to create a Regional Association of Tver′ Doctors (*Oblastnoe obshchestvo vrachei Tverskikh*). It could become a kind of alternative to the trade union, that is, they would take certain functions upon themselves, like providing some

financial support, assisting in re-education, advocating specific interests of doctors in a conflict situation. This idea has failed for some reason. (…) I think that nowadays it does not make much sense to have a separate trade union for doctors only. Because there's no mutual understanding (*vzaimoponimanie*) between doctors working in different hospitals (…). We simply won't find any understanding between different kinds of medical specialists. (…) It's much easier to do things (…) when everyone is included, the middle-ranking personnel and low level personnel, everybody. (*profkom* president)

The *obkom* president saw that the potential rift and conflicts of interest between the employees and employer could be solved if both parties serve the needs of the work collective: "If an employer is smart enough he joins the trade union, because we believe that even a wise employer should always have a trade union as an opponent. However, a chief doctor (…) should simply understand and support the interests of the [work] collective. He has to support the claims of the trade union and it really does not matter whether he's a member or not." This idea of the management as defending the interests of the work collective is reminiscent of the Soviet idea of the work collective: everybody was supposed to pursue the good of the collective irrespective of the position in the occupational hierarchy. Consequently, the conflicting interests within the collective cannot be articulated. The *obkom* president also understands the Union as an opponent of employers and thus TUHW members are, in fact, defined in opposition to each other. The TUHW is simultaneously an opponent to and representative of employers. This clearly shows the problematic nature of the 'common' interests of the collective.

This weakness of collective identity in the TUHW can be understood as a manifestation of the decoupling of interests and identities, which is a more general characteristic of the Soviet and post-Soviet associational domain (Urban *et al.* 1997). According to Urban and his associates (1997, 4), in Western societies "individuals organize into 'voluntary associations' around certain interests which they represent to others (…), thus linking themselves to one another within these associations, producing social identities". By contrast, in Soviet society such a formation of interests and identities was not possible: people could not publicly articulate and organize around political identities based on common interests. This tradition continues to be seen in post-Soviet trade unions. The formation of interests is still structured vertically, along the hierarchical lines of state power, which hinders the creation of horizontal ties among the people (Urban *et al.* 1997, 303). This also manifests itself in the TUHW's gravitation towards the authorities; as a result interests are defined in relation to and locked into the framework of *vlast'/narod*. TUHW members see no point in differentiating the Union on professional lines or worker identity, because everyone is understood to pursue the 'common good' of the work collective. This

effectively militates against the formation of a collective identity based on group-specific interests.

Significant silence: gender

Taking into account the fact that 86 percent of TUHW members in Tver′ are women, it is intriguing that the collective identity of the Union was not articulated in terms of gender. TUHW activists did not frame their position or make claims by referring to the fact that the workers are predominantly women. They did not articulate the low salaries and unsatisfactory working conditions as an expression of gender-based oppression or as a manifestation of the lack of appreciation for women's work. The interviewees often said how unfair it is that they do important work but are paid next to nothing, but they did not connect this with gender. By contrast, for example in Finland, female-dominated professions and labor unions began to politicize gender in the 1970s–1980s. The trade union of nurses stated that the occupational hierarchy in which (male) doctors enjoyed the most prestigious and respected positions was a manifestation of the lack of appreciation towards women and their work (Alasuutari 1996, 145). This silence surrounding gender in the TUHW can be seen to stem, on the one hand, from the Soviet gender system, which effectively inhibited the articulation of gender as a source of oppression and women's mobilization to deal with this oppression. On the other hand, it can also indicate reluctance to challenge the male elite within the trade union movement, and a fear of alienating male activists in the TUHW.

Silence surrounding gender in the TUHW was not, however, complete. The union activists did acknowledge that health care is a female-dominated sector. Some interviewees hinted at certain characteristics that they regarded typical for women, such as a sense of responsibility, which in their view explained the prevalence of women in the sector. Gender also implicitly emerged through the importance given to work devoted to children in the TUHW. Since the sector is female-dominated and women as a rule carry the main responsibility for children, the Union provides women support in this area. The question of gender inequality also came up in one of my interviews with Galina Leonidovna in an unexpected way. She told me that gender inequality exists in the Russian health care sector, because male doctors are paid the same salary as female doctors, although they are breadwinners. She contemplated this issue in connection with our discussion about the seminar on gender equality organized by the TUHW's Central Committee and Swedish trade unions. Galina Leonidovna considered the Swedish concerns for women's discrimination in health care as misplaced. In her view, Russian men were victims of discrimination, because of the lack of wage differentiation according to the male breadwinner principle. Women's and men's different wage expectations were also touched upon in another interview:

ALLA SERGEEVNA: A new doctor who [has], let's say, five years experience of work, who works for one and a half times the basic wage (*rabotaia na poltary stavki*) and even if his working conditions are unhealthy, his average salary would be about 850 rubles. (…) He may make 1,500 rubles per month depending on the medical institution he works at, but it's still not a decent salary. Especially for a man. (*profkom* president)

The *obkom* legal adviser also acknowledged that health care is the lowest-paying sector and the employees are predominantly women. Unlike the *obkom* president, she raised the issue that some of the female workers are divorced and family breadwinners. However, she did not frame the salary problem as a form of women's oppression in society.

There is also a gender gap in trade union representation in Russia. According to trade union statistics, in the FNPR executive committee only one of the 25 members was a woman and in the FNPR general committee of the 187 members, only 25 were women. This means that women are not adequately represented in the key institutions that are supposed to defend their interests.

Grappling with politics

TUHW activists construct the TUHW's identity in relation to civic organizations and political parties. When the activists talked about their Union, they referred to it as a 'civic organization' (*obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*) and, occasionally, 'societal work' (*obshchestvennaia rabota*). The identification with civic organizations was shifting, as the activists also distinguished themselves from them. The TUHW as a trade union was perceived as having more leverage than 'ordinary' civic organizations, because it has a legally defined basis for its activities.[29]

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: The trade unions are the only civic organization left in our life (…) which can legally protect their members. It's the only organization and there is no other organization of that kind. (…) We have now Women's Assemblies (*Zhenskie Assamblei*), but they don't have any legal base. The only thing they can do is to express their opinion. (…) They have many members but they just raise issues. They may also approach the authorities to make their voices heard. But they don't have any juridical capacity, it's just public opinion. (…) We have an Association of Doctors (*Assosiatsiia vrachei*), (…) it's a civic organization. But our activities are regulated by the "Law on Trade Unions" and we have a legal right to demand certain things. And this Association is a civic organization, all they can do is to present a wish, but who would take this wish into account?

Civic organizations are portrayed in the quote as being merely able to voice 'opinion' and 'wishes', while the TUHW can allegedly do much more. Trade

unions used to have the right of legislative initiative – they could submit bills and amendments directly to the legislature – but this right was terminated in the Russian Constitution of 1993 (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 37). It is interesting that Galina Leonidovna does not regard aggregation and voicing of public opinion as being of particular significance.

When TUHW activists wished to make a distinction between the state and trade unions, they named their Union as a civic organization, which implies independence and distance from the economic and political elites. Galina Leonidovna circulated the rhetorical pair *narod/vlast'* in constructing the TUHW as a defender of ordinary people vis-à-vis the corrupted power structures:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: People complain against the employer but these complaints go to the district administration – this can be a head of a hospital, a judge, a prosecutor, a police officer – and these officials all support each other. They are out of reach. And if an ordinary person complains against them s/he can hardly reach them. But a trade union is still a civic organization, we are independent and we can speak our minds and protect this person.

Unlike the members of the CGS, the interviewed TUHW activists did not employ the concept of civil society (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*) in describing their activities. The majority of them did not recognize the concept at all; for some it triggered an association with egalitarian welfare provision and income distribution. Neither did TUHW activists use the concept of the third sector (*tretii sektor*) or social partnership (*sotsial'noe partnerstvo*) in articulating their activities. As was explained earlier, the social partnership framework has been an influential discourse in the Russian trade union movement, in particular in the FNPR. In this sense, the absence of the term social partnership in TUHW members' interviews is notable. TUHW activists did talk about collective tripartite agreements, which in practice form the backbone of social partnership, but these agreements were approached as technical tools, not as part of a discourse of social partnership. Thus, social partnership is not a meaningful concept for identity-work for all grassroots level activists, although it is a pivotal component of the FNPR's toolkit.

TUHW activists also defined their identity in relation to political parties. They unequivocally defined the TUHW as an independent, non-political and non-party organization. In this way they wished to mark a separation from their previous status as an auxiliary of the CPSU. Galina Leonidovna articulated the TUHW as distinguished from political parties and other civic organizations as follows: "There are political parties and they deal with politics (*vedut politicheskuiu rabotu*). There are civic associations (*ob''edineniia*), they are also busy with political issues. Only the trade union can handle the everyday (*zhiteiskie*) situations and protect social rights [of the workers]." She continued explaining what the TUHW's non-political position means:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: We don't give preference to any political party, because we think that members of our trade union may have different opinions and different thoughts so we can't impose the political preferences of one member on others. That's why we believe that the trade unions are non-party [organizations] (*vne politiki*), although politics is always with us. (*laughing*) (…) however, we try to support those who are doing most for the people (*narod*), but (…) we don't have any specific preferences for a certain political party. We believe that we should co-operate with everyone. (…) During elections we support those leaders whose political agenda is appealing to us, [those] who take care of the people (*zabotiatsia o narode*). We support the leaders no matter what party they represent, (…) but not parties.

Whereas CGS activists voiced deep distrust toward collaboration with politicians, in the TUHW the situation was more ambivalent. Although the Union seeks to maintain its non-party status, the *obkom* collaborates with political forces in order to promote the interests of the Union. According to Galina Leonidovna, the TUHW can ally with political leaders who pursue the benefit of the people. This separation of leaders from parties is a telling manifestation of the personification of politics in Russia. Political parties are not, in general, grounded in grassroots activities, but are rather established around a leader and not based on a political ideology or on social identities and interests (McAuley 1995).[30] The ambiguous relationship with political parties characterizes the Russian trade union movement, in general. Although unions have supported political parties and leaders, they regard it necessary to be able to collaborate with all political forces that reach power. This flexible attitude has been advocated especially by regional trade union organizations that have to safeguard working relations with politicians irrespective of the election results. In the TUHW, contacts and co-operation with political institutions is principally the *obkom*'s task; *profkomy* do not wish to get involved in politics:

ANDREI PAVLOVICH: There are sometimes, how to put it, attempts (…) [at] this purely local political level, say, the city Duma level. (…) Those people come and start persuading: let's organize a [newspaper] article together against this deputy and that deputy. Generally, we estrange ourselves straight away, because those political (…) games aren't for us. But attempts happen. About once or twice a year quite active people come. They usually represent somebody's interests, and we hardly ever have contacts with them. (*profkom* president)

Despite the wish to draw a distinction between themselves and political forces, TUHW activists often construed the Communists as their congenial soulmates.[31] The TUHW and the Communists were portrayed as defenders of the people (*narod*) and as wishing to preserve the Soviet value system and

ideals. They do not, however, collaborate with each other particularly keenly. TUHW activists assessed other political parties than the Communist Party very negatively, as being characterized by selfishness and the pursuit of personal gain and ambition (cf. Chapter 2). Politics was described as something that happens 'out there' and cannot be reached by the *narod*, which entails that the *narod* cannot exercise political citizenship in a meaningful way. One *profkom* president, for example, explained that politics "gives something to the small group of the society, but as for the rest it is indifferent". Pro-presidential parties, such as United Russia, were understood as parties of the elite and none of the TUHW members wished to join them. Generation and social class emerged as central markers of political parties. The *obkom* president described the right-wing party 'Union of Right Forces' (*Soiuz Pravykh Sil*) as being "totally opposite" to the Union, because its members are, unlike TUHW activists, "established people (*obespechennye*)", "economists", "qualified (*gramotnye*) and smart" and young.

In contrast to current parties, TUHW members portrayed participation in the CPSU as an altruistic activity. The majority of them had belonged to the CPSU, but none of them had a party card now. They reacted to the way the CPSU and Soviet past were, in their view, discredited in today's Russia. This discrediting threatened to make their sacrifices and devotion irrelevant, harmful, even criminal.

ANNA NIKOLAEVNA: As for these [political parties] that exist, I believe that these are people who simply try to get certain benefits for themselves by means of their membership in the party. (…) Before it was different – no matter what they now say about our Communist Party [CPSU]. I was an ordinary party member. They now say that they [the Communists] used to make profit out of other people's work. I myself had nothing. I paid the party membership fees, I was a member of the CPSU and I worked wherever I could and I tried to do my best. (…) I became a president of the trade union committee. (…) I was working there day and night and I wouldn't get a penny for this work. Not even a penny! And when they now say that we used to … that the Communists have plundered (*razgrabili*) the country, I say to these people: "(…) Do I have a limousine or what? I walk on foot just like you."[32] (*profkom* president)

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the TUHW constructs and negotiates its collective identity. The prognostic frame in the TUHW identifies the goal of the Union as the protection of workers' interests and socio-economic rights, helping them to defend their rights and providing them with economic, emotional and moral support. In the protection of workers' rights, raising salaries is seen as the most important goal. In their trade union work,

TUHW activists identify the declining unionization rate and passiveness of the membership as the biggest problems, and the cultivation of collectivism as a central goal. Unlike CGS members, who diagnose the Soviet past as the source of problems in contemporary Russia, TUHW activists think that problems in health care and union work stem from the social transformation of the 1990s. They discuss only in passing the problems and shortcomings that plagued the Soviet health care system and trade unions.

The collapse of the Soviet Union emerges as a cultural trauma in the interviews with TUHW activists. This trauma is first and foremost linked with the dissolution of the Communist morality and collectivist ethos, upon which the health care sector and trade union work are understood to be based. TUHW activists think that the traditional altruistic and humane ethos is eroding and is being replaced by a "practical", "realistic" and industry-like one. This change in the ethos is simultaneously narrated as a change in national identity: the social transformation threatens to introduce an "unnatural" and "alien" individualistic moral order into Russian society. Whereas CGS activists envisage the 'perestroika of a person', TUHW activists wish to preserve *Homo Sovieticus*. Generation centrally articulates this narrative of the changing occupational ethos and national identity. Whereas in the CGS the younger generation is posited as an agent of social change, in the TUHW youth is portrayed as embodying the new occupational ethos and not sharing the Communist morality upon which the TUHW's work relies. The 'we' in the TUHW is defined as the Soviet generation, which arguably contributes to the alienation of youth from union activism.

The strategic frame identifies the TUHW's forms of activity. The TUHW relies more on collaborative than contentious tactics. The Union primary organizations do not directly tackle the problem of salaries, and thus workers cannot do much to improve their socio-economic situation at the level of their workplace. This potentially alienates workers from the Union. Both the CGS and the TUHW seek to create a sense of communality and cultivate informal sociability in their activities. Primary organizations are involved in organizing cultural activities, which can be seen as an attempt to create emotional capital and combat alienation. However, although cultural activities can generate emotional commitment to the workplace, this commitment does not readily translate into an increased political mobilization in the Union.

Russian trade unions differ in many respects from Western European trade unions. Russian unions focus upon sociability and are less inclined to tackle employment rights and defend workers' interests, activities which form the *raison d'être* of Western European unions. Unlike Western trade unions in the health care sector, the TUHW does not protect professional interests, because it includes in its membership all occupational categories employed in the health care sector. The TUHW, and Russian trade unions in general, also view their constituency as larger than that of Western European trade unions: they target their actions not only at workers, but also

very importantly at their families. This combination of private and public spheres makes manifest the focus of the TUHW's activities on everyday life and sociability. The workplace has an important meaning for workers (cf. Alapuro and Lonkila 2000; Ashwin 1999), as workers' interests are constructed vis-à-vis the work collective rather than on the basis of a professional affiliation.

This chapter has shown how a shared sense of we-ness is a salient factor in organized collective action. The all-inclusive membership in the TUHW and in other branch-based trade unions impedes the formation of a collective identity on the basis of professional interests or workers' interests vis-à-vis the management. The TUHW cannot effectively put forward grievances, because workers are afraid of losing their jobs, making them prone to dampen conflicts instead of confronting the employer. In addition, conflicts in the workplace are difficult to deal with, since both the employer and the worker may be union members and the TUHW must simultaneously defend and oppose its members.

The analysis in this chapter also reveals how blurred the boundaries between workers, management and the state are. The TUHW makes its claims primarily on the state authorities, not the employer. Employers are frequently described as being in the same boat as the TUHW: they fight together with workers for concessions from the authorities. Owing to the TUHW's inability to mobilize based on specific interests of workers or professions, it bases its identity on a mythical collectivity of *narod*, which, however, is far too loose an identity to mobilize workers. *Narod* is constructed as disempowered in relation to *vlast'*, which as a rule refers to the federal power structures. Employers and local and regional authorities are often portrayed as partners of the TUHW. This conceals the fact that the plight of the Union largely derives from the decisions made by these authorities and employers.

TUHW activists define the Union as a non-political organization, thus distinguishing it from its Soviet position as a party auxiliary. However, despite its non-political identity, it nevertheless actively seeks collaboration with political leaders and legislatures, unlike the CGS. While the CGS seeks to disassociate itself from Soviet organizational culture, the TUHW seeks both to disassociate – by defining itself as a non-political, independent organization and by arranging demonstrations – and to reproduce Soviet organizational culture – cultural activities, collectivism, and all-inclusive membership. Whereas CGS activists wish to build collectivism based on individualism, the TUHW activists seek to preserve Soviet collectivism and tend to conceive the collective as having common interests that all its members serve. Although the TUHW wishes to preserve many of its Soviet-era traditions and practices, some of these practices may also serve new purposes today (cf. Burawoy and Verdery 1999). For example, the importance of collectivism in the TUHW can be seen both as a continuation of Soviet trade unionism practices *and* as a reaction to the individualization and break-up of the collectivist social order in post-Soviet Russia.

Although there is dissatisfaction among the TUHW activists in Tver′, it is difficult to make radical changes in the Union, because of its nationwide, centralized structure. Regional union branches have gained more freedom and autonomy during the post-Soviet era, but they cannot, for example, unilaterally exclude the management from their membership. A real challenge to the TUHW would be the emergence of a competing, alternative trade union that would attract young people to its ranks, exclude the management, organize on a professional basis and engage in contentious action in the protection of workers' rights.

6 Redefining citizenship
Views of the authorities

Nastia, a civic activist from Tver′, sent me an e-mail in November 2004. She had set up an art club with her friends that received financial support from the regional governmental committee of youth affairs. The club published a journal and had recently prepared an issue on nationalism in Russia. This issue was, however, censored by the committee with the words "now is no time to write about nationalism". Nastia wrote to me saying:

> Here everyone is afraid of (…) telling the truth. We tried [with our journal] but we were silenced. (…) Here in Russia everything is much more complicated than it seems. People are not inactive, but they are not allowed to be active, their mouths are shut, everything is decided by those who have power!

A strikingly different picture of the relationship between the authorities and civic organizations was presented by President Putin in the Civic Forum in 2001. This Forum was initiated by the presidential administration and it gathered together representatives of state institutions and the civic sector.[1] Putin addressed the audience as follows:

> Without a true partnership relationship between the state and society there can be neither a strong state nor a prosperous and happy society. What is needed is an equal dialogue. And we are aware that the effectiveness of the dialogue depends on us to a great extent, on the representatives of power (…). We are ready to listen attentively and to hear what you propose. I believe that now that the time of truly great opportunities has come for Russia and its citizens such co-operation can become highly productive, our state needs it. (…) It is our duty together to use the historical chance presented to us. Otherwise, we may again find ourselves in the 'backyard of civilization'.

These two stories illustrate the contradictory and ambivalent relationships between the state and civic organizations in today's Russia. The next two chapters seek to unpack the dynamics of these relationships by presenting a

close-up analysis of how activists and authorities in Tver′ interact and perceive their mutual relationships. The role of state institutions in the development of Russian civic activity has not attracted much scholarly attention until recently, although, as the examples above suggest, the state's participation in determining the boundaries of, and opportunities for, civic activity is of crucial importance. Howard has argued that the strengthening of civil society in post-socialist societies essentially involves a reappraisal of the state and its relation to civic organizations: "A convincing body of literature has demonstrated that in the older democracies, the state has played a crucial role in enabling, facilitating and encouraging the existence and flourishing of civil society organizations" (Howard 2002b, 168). The development of civic activism in Russia is organically intertwined with the redefinition of the state. Whereas in the Soviet system the state held a monopoly in the organization of human life, in post-Soviet Russia this monopoly has been defeated and the rights and responsibilities of the state, citizens and society have come under reorganization. This has entailed changing the rationality of government (cf. Sending and Neumann 2006). This chapter begins with an overview of discourses on civic activity and interaction practices between the state and civic groups at the national level, after which the ways in which the authorities articulate the relationships between the state and civic organizations in Tver′ will be analyzed.

Public discourses: civil society, the third sector and social partnership

The public discussion on civil society began in Soviet Russia in the 1980s.[2] Civil society was, together with the law-governed state (*pravovoe gosudarstvo*) and democracy (*demokratiia*), a key notion in political imagery and functioned as a concept of resistance towards the Party-State (Zdravomyslova 1996, 18; Belokurova 2002, 32). It was also used to reconceptualize the relationship between the state and citizens. Civil society was interpreted as referring to independent and autonomous civic organizations acting as a counterforce to the state (Zdravomyslova 1996, 19; Belokurova 2002).

However, in the course of the 1990s competing notions of civil society emerged, such as the 'third sector' (*tretii sektor*) and a 'social partnership' (*sotsial′noe partnerstvo*).[3] These concepts are connected with different intellectual traditions and provide an alternative articulation of the relations between the state, the economy and society. Both social partnership and third sector are more pragmatically oriented notions than civil society. They emphasize social problems as the main object of civic activity and cooperation between different sectors of society. By contrast, the notion of civil society tends to underline the political dimension of civic activity and the potentially conflictual relations between civic activity and the state. The resonance of social partnership and the third sector in contemporary Russia arguably stems from the dislocation of Soviet social protection.

The conceptual home of the third sector is in the United States where it is closely linked with charity (Etzioni 1973; Nylund 1998, 40). Academic discussion has offered the third sector various definitions. Siisiäinen (2000, 7) understands it as a field that develops at the interface between the state, market and civil society. Raik (2004, 222) argues that the third sector model builds on neoliberal thought and encompasses the idea of non-profit organizations that undertake those tasks that neither the state nor the market is able or willing to deal with (see also Pursiainen 2000, 20). According to Hemment (2004a, 216), international donors were the first to introduce the term 'third sector' to Russia. Because Western, and in particular US funding, has centrally influenced the formation of the Russian civic sector, we can conclude that donor agencies have played a crucial part in promoting the understanding and structuring of civic activity as a third sector.

The concept of social partnership in Russia has at least two roots. First, Liborakina, Fliamer, and Iakimets (1996) have elaborated it as a way to challenge the Soviet organization of social relations. They define social partnership as the "constructive co-operation between two or three sectors – the state, market, non-profit sector – in resolving social problems" (ibid., 3). The stress on the necessity of co-operation between different sectors marks a break from the Soviet state's monopoly in dealing with societal problems. Second, as discussed in Chapter 5, social partnership has also achieved considerable popularity in the higher echelons of the Russian trade union movement as a way of reorganizing the relationship between the state and the trade unions in the post-Soviet era (Ashwin and Clarke 2003; see also Peregudov 1998; Rogova 1998). The Russian state has also adopted the term social partnership and reinterpreted it for its own purposes. According to Zdravomyslova (2005), social partnership has become the official discourse of the Russian state vis-à-vis civic organizations.

We can say that the concept of civil society implying potentially contentious relations with the state has partly made room for more socially and collaboratively oriented concepts of social partnership and the third sector. However, civil society continues to have a certain currency in contemporary Russian political discourse. For example, President Putin, right after his re-election in 2004, hastened to assure the public that one of the crucial tasks was to "strengthen civil society". The contents of civil society and democracy are currently under redefinition. During the Putin era, democracy has gained at least three descriptive attributes; 'managed' (*upravliaemaia*), 'Eastern' (*vostochnaia*), and most recently 'sovereign' (*suverennaia*).[4] All these definitions aim at reformulating the concept of democracy to better 'fit' Russia. Democracy *à la* Russia entails a centralization of state power and a 'managed civil society'. In this framework, both democracy and civil society lose their critical and emancipatory dimension. Pursiainen (2004) has argued that the dominant discourse on civil society in Russia since the end of the 1990s has been based on the idea of a strong paternalistic state and formal democracy with a third-sector type of civil society mobilizing society to help

the state. In this sense, there has been a discursive shift from a 'civil society against the state' towards a 'third sector as a helpmate of the state'.

Practices of interaction: from distance to selective partnership

The practices of interaction between the authorities and civic groups have evolved during the last decade. In the beginning of the 1990s, an anti-state approach was prominent (Brygalina and Temkina 2004, 211): organizations tended to be wary of the state and wished to stress their independence and avoid co-operation with governmental structures. Neither did the state show much interest in or understanding towards organizations and their role in society. After the mid-1990s, the anti-state approach began to lose its hegemonic position and the state and civic organizations gradually came together and searched for forms of collaboration (Iakimets 2002; Brygalina and Temkina 2004).

We can identify four main forms of co-operation between civic organizations and the state in contemporary Russia. First, federal, regional and local administrations announce competitions for civic organizations to realize socially significant projects with government funding. The practice of tendering a 'social order' (*sotsial'nyi zakaz*) is an example of this. Second, governmental structures offer organizations benefits in kind, such as free premises, telephone, etc. Third, co-operation may occasionally acquire a more institutionalized form. One example of this is the Women's Crisis Center in Tver': the administration paid the salaries for four employees and gave the center free premises, but otherwise the Center functioned on a voluntary basis. Fourth, in many cities, special co-operation organs have been established where representatives of civic organizations, local government and other relevant groups meet and discuss topical questions. These co-operation councils are embryonic institutionalized channels for public participation and have provided, at least to some degree, opportunities for civic organizations to voice their opinions and utilize their expertise in addressing public issues. The authorities have also established special units within local and regional administrations in order to develop co-operation with civic groups.

Over the past few years, relationships between the state and civic groups have evolved more in the direction of state-led selective corporatism (Zdravomyslova 2005). The authorities have tended to categorize civic organizations into 'collaborative' and 'contentious' ones. They include in the corporatist framework the collaborative organizations that do not question the state's authority and help the state to tackle, in particular, social problems. By contrast, they distance themselves from critical and contentious organizations, such as human rights and environmental groups, which are frequently regarded as adversaries of the state (cf. Evans 2006). In 2004, the Interior Ministry, for example, proposed that police liaison officers should be assigned to all human rights groups, in order to 'enhance co-operation' between law enforcement bodies and such groups. Human rights activists

interpreted this as an attempt to place them under police surveillance.[5] The authorities have also attempted to manipulate civic activity by establishing quasi-civic organizations under the auspices of state structures, which can be seen as attempts to co-opt the civic sphere. This can be seen as detrimental to democracy, as it undermines individual and political autonomy.[6] In this context, social partnership has meant that the state aims to turn independent organizations into Soviet-type 'transmission belts' – loyal state auxiliaries – which would mobilize the masses to support and implement government policies. This would also facilitate state control over civic activity (Zdravo-myslova 2005). The above-discussed co-operation councils can potentially have contradictory effects in this context. They can improve governance by increasing state accountability and citizens' participation, but they can also turn into vehicles of selective corporatism, involving only obedient organizations.

The state has also impeded the activities of civic organizations through legislative means in recent years. Many civic organizations are in great financial straits because they are not guaranteed tax exemptions; they are in fact treated as commercial entities (Dzhibladze 2005; Henderson 2003). Furthermore, tax legislation is so complicated that it is practically impossible for organizations to abide by it. This makes organizations vulnerable, because they can be persecuted on the basis of so-called tax irregularities. This may result in organizations moderating their criticism and practising self-censorship (Dzhibladze 2005). The state also controls corporate philanthropy by offering tax concessions only for contributions that are given to organizations that the government supports and/or finances (Liborakina 2004). Moreover, the recently adopted amendments to the 'Law on Civic Associations' have made it more difficult for foreign donors to assist Russian civic organizations, strained registration procedures and facilitated state control over civic activities. The law 'On Combating Extremist Activities' and related changes to the laws governing civic organizations and the media gives the state power to close any organization or media outlet out of favour with the authorities by allegedly engaging in the planning, preparation or execution of activities undermining the security of the Russian Federation. The founding of political parties has also been made more difficult and the right to assembly has been curtailed (Dzhibladze 2005).

Financial resources affect the strategies and positions civic organizations adopt vis-à-vis the state. On the one hand, foreign funding can be seen to have contributed to a tendency to dampen conflicts and promote the search for 'constructive' co-operation between the state and civic organizations. Yanitsky (2000, 78) has argued that foreign donors have facilitated the taming of the Russian environmental movement, because they have preferred to finance moderate organizations dealing with environmental education, but not more radical protest groups. The representative of the British Council I interviewed stated that the Council does not finance organizations that openly challenge the authorities, but rather organizations that are willing to engage in co-operation with them. On the other hand,

foreign funding can also enable independent civic activism. For example, in the case of the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies (CGS), co-operation with foreign donors and the transnational women's movement has provided it with access to symbolic and material resources, which in turn has given it autonomy and authority vis-à-vis the state structures.

Organizations' funding also affects the ways the authorities view organizations. Foreign assistance to civic groups has been regarded with suspicion by the authorities. For example, the FSB chief Nikolai Patrushev has accused civic organizations of operating as a cover for Western spies in Russia, and President Putin has warned that the Russian government will not tolerate any foreign support for the political activities of Russian civic organizations. Furthermore, in his speech in May 2004 Putin accused civic organizations of serving "dubious groups and commercial interests" and of ignoring citizens' problems. He also criticized organizations for being more interested in obtaining funding from international donors than in defending "the real interests of the people".

There is considerable regional diversity in the ways civic organizations have established relations with governmental structures (see Iakimets 2002; Sevortyan and Barchukova 2002). Changes at the federal level condition, to a certain degree, civic activity in the regions, but each locality also has its own political dynamic and power relationships, which shape the opportunities for and limits of organizational activities. As a result of Soviet economic policies, there are still a number of localities that are dominated by a single production plant wielding considerable political power. Other localities can be equally tightly controlled by new entrepreneurs. In these localities independent civic activity, such as trade union activism, can be very difficult (see Rautio 2003; Ashwin 1999). In the regions where mayors and governors rule in an authoritarian manner, there is also less scope for the activity of independent civic groups compared to more democratic regions (Sundstrom 2002).

In Tver′, the scope for action of civic groups has been relatively broad until recently, for several reasons. There are no monopolistic production plants located in the area to dominate the socio-political landscape and neither have there been any strong competing interest groups in the region. The political elite has been quite poor in terms of resources (Ovchinnikov 2000). The relative poverty of the Tver′ region, in comparison to many other Russian regions, has also motivated civic activity, in particular, in the social sector and has encouraged the local government to search for points of contact with these organizations. On the other hand, Tver′ traditionally has been dependent politically and economically on Moscow, which also shapes local civic activism.

Officials and structures

In this section I analyze the dynamics of interaction between the authorities and civic groups in Tver′ from the viewpoint of officials employed in the city

and regional administrations. The analysis is based on interviews with eight officials conducted during 2001–2. Obviously their views do not represent the totality of views in the administrative bodies, but they nevertheless convey important information about the perceptions of those officials who co-operate with civic groups. Furthermore, I assume the interviews reveal those views and ways of speech that are considered legitimate in the administrative terrain.

In all administrative structures studied the staff was female-dominated, but men held the leadership positions. None of the interviewees questioned this gender hierarchy. They put forward essentialist interpretations of women's and men's different orientations and capacities and in this way legitimized the prevailing hierarchy. The female representative of the city's Committee of Youth Affairs (*Komitet po delam molodezhi*), for example, suggested that women were good at performing "routine work", while men "think in a more strategic way" and have more authority. I was often told that women do not want to have leading positions, but rather choose to have the role of the 'functionary'. Some interviewees stressed that although women do not have formal power, they have significant 'informal power' in the administration and at home. The male representative of the city's Committee of PR and Media (*Komitet po sviazam s obshchestvennost'iu i sredstvami massovoi informatsii*) stated: "Women are wiser, they understand that they do not need to be leaders in order to govern. They entrusted to men the role of leader, and they govern through men, promote their inter-ests through men. A man comes home and consults whom? A woman. And as a consequence, he says what the woman wants."

All the interviewed officials reported that their administrative units have collaborated with civic organizations. The city's Committee of PR and Media has, in particular, played a key role in developing mechanisms of co-operation in the city. The Committee collaborated with a wide spectrum of groups, including for example, the Women's Crisis Center, the CGS, youth organizations, disabled people's groups, veterans' and pensioners' organiza-tions and *Zhenskaia Assambleia*. The city's Committee for Youth Affairs worked primarily with youth organizations concerned with military patri-otism, history, ethnography, tourism and sport. The department of educa-tion in the city collaborates mainly with the parents' organization, and the regional department of health care (*Departament zdravoohraneniia*) with the Red Cross and trade unions. The regional department of social protection (*Departament sotsial'noi zashchity*) consulted civic organizations, too, such as the Veterans' Council, the Red Cross, pensioners' organizations, disabled people's organizations, organizations of the deaf and blind, and organiza-tions advocating the interests of the veterans of the Afghan and Chechen wars and victims of the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

There was no common policy to be found among the officials concerning civic organizations. Planning of long-term policies and institutionalization of interaction between the administration and civic organizations is ham-pered by the fact that the key positions and structures in the administration

are always reorganized after the election of a new mayor or governor. For example, after the election of the new mayor in Tver' in 2003, the Committee of PR and Media was closed down and the administrative staff underwent significant changes. The officials employed in the administration are arguably aware of this uncertainty in their work and position, which limits the ability to pursue long-term policies. Because of the weak institutionalization of the interaction between civic groups and the administration, personal opinions and inclinations of a particular official have considerable influence on the interaction. This also explains why civic organizations often seek to build personal ties with particular officials in the administration.

During my fieldwork, I first developed identification with local civic activists, and having heard their negative assessments of the authorities, I initially and unconsciously read the interviews of the authorities from the position of an activist. During the reading process, I had to actively distance myself from this reading position and reflect upon my own prejudices in relation to the authorities, in order to do justice to their thoughts. I have consciously sought to engage in a dialogue with the authorities' interview texts in the same way as I did with the interviews of the activists. In this way I have been able to locate more complex and polyphonic positions and voices in the authorities' interviews than when reading them from the activist position. My position as a Westerner who does not engage with the Russian state structures on a daily basis undoubtedly also helped in establishing distance from the activist/authority positions.

I have identified in the interviews with the officials three interpretative repertoires, which all produce different subject positions and tasks for civic organizations, citizens and the authorities. The repertoires are called the minimal state and extensive third sector repertoire; the 'complementation' repertoire; and the representation and mediation repertoire. All these repertoires define the role of civic groups from the point of view of what is beneficial and desirable from the perspective of the local and regional government.

Minimal state and extensive third sector

The minimal state and extensive third sector repertoire constructs civic organizations and the state as partners: civic organizations are portrayed as the main agent in producing services and solving societal problems and the state as only supporting and helping civic organizations in this task. This repertoire mirrors global shifts in governance and a redrawing of the boundary between the public sector and non-governmental actors. Non-governmental actors assume tasks previously managed by the state, and the state governs 'through' non-governmental actors by using their expertise and resources in tackling various problems (Sending and Neumann 2006). On the one hand, the repertoire of the minimal state and extensive third sector has an empowering aspect: it offers civic groups and citizens more opportunities to participate in governance and thus enhances the exercise of

citizenship. On the other hand, it also simultaneously calls for increased individual and organizational responsibility and a reduced scope for state activity, which legitimizes state withdrawal and constructs an ethos of self-reliance. This repertoire emphasizes citizens' possibilities *and* obligations to participate in governance and responsibility for the local community. The solutions to societal problems are sought on the individual rather than the systemic level. For example, one of the officials stated that "how well human rights are realized depends 90 percent on the person him/herself, and 10 percent on the state".

In this repertoire, it is suggested that governmental services and, in particular, social services, should be transferred to civic organizations. The rationale underpinning this transfer is that the increased involvement of civic organizations increases citizens' responsibility. This, in turn, alleviates the burden of the state and enhances the quality of governance. This is represented as an ideal, as something that does not yet exist, owing to the underdevelopment of the organization sector:

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: I think there are differences [between municipal social services and the services of civic organizations]. (…) Though we know that in many countries civic organizations have in a way taken up the functions of municipalities. Take, for instance, [the Crisis Center], there's no such municipal service, right? They provide it as a civic organization. It's quite probable, however, that someday this Crisis Center will (…) become a municipal institution. (…) At the moment, services in the social sphere are provided more by municipal than by civic actors. (…) Still, I think as civil society develops and establishes itself, things will be vice versa. I mean, the municipality will give social services over to civic organizations.

SUVI: Do you think it's a good tendency?

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: I believe it's good, it's very good … The city should not do it, the authorities should not. There are other problems that have to be dealt with. (…) If it's a true, sound organization, [it can] manage perfectly and provide the social service (…). It's a vision. (…) it doesn't work yet. (city's Committee of PR and Media)

The concept of civil society is employed here in envisioning the future distribution of responsibilities. The development of civil society is interpreted as entailing a transfer of state functions to civic organizations, and the state is portrayed as only assisting these organizations. In this way, civil society acquires meanings that tie it to the third sector model: organizations administer those social services that the state does not want or cannot produce. However, although it is suggested that service delivery should be transferred more to organizations, Nadezhda Vladimirovna also sees that some services now performed by civic groups could become governmental in future.

Sergei Aleksandrovich from the city's Committee of PR and Media also advocated a larger role for civic groups:

SERGEI ALEKSANDROVICH: One mustn't make the administration responsible for everything going on in the city. The administration has a limited number of functions. What goes on in the yards, in houses, in society, is the (…) problem and responsibility of civic organizations, **too**. Hence, their activity, their responsibility should certainly grow. There is, however, also a redistribution taking place: some functions of the state go to civic organizations. I mean, they have to take up this load (*oni dolzhny etot gruz brat'*) and our task is to help them. (…) You know, both in the past and today, 90 percent of social services in our country were and still are provided by the municipality. (…) Some of these services are being gradually given over to civic organizations. (…) it's only that we can't, for example, give civic organizations responsibility for the provision of pensions. But care for the elderly, for instance, can be given over [to them]. But what will in fact be the difference – it's that civic organizations will provide the services in smaller amounts and, hence, quite probably, the quality of the services will be slightly higher.

The interviewee makes a normative requirement: organizations themselves have to undertake previously state-produced tasks. The quotes of these two officials show that a reassessment of the scope of the state's functions is envisaged: what the state should provide and what responsibilities organizations should take on. Not all services are equally suitable for non-governmental actors, and thus the state has to retain some of them for itself, such as the pension system. Sergei Aleksandrovich also considered that civic organizations can provide services of higher quality than the state, and they can also contribute to improving the level of services as a whole. He describes civic groups operating as a 'sparring partner' of the state: "Their [civic organizations'] main function [is that] they'll become competitors to the state and the municipality, and eventually both civic organizations and the state will work better."

The role of the authorities as a helper of civic groups was put forward not only in relation to service delivery, but also in the context of youth policies. Irina Mikhailovna, vice-head of the city's Committee of Youth Affairs, saw youth groups as primary actors in organizing activities for youth: "We're [in the Committee] just their [youth organizations'] **assistants**, just **co-participants** in their actions. But we are not in the least inspectors, we don't in the least dictate our own conditions." According to Irina Mikhailovna, the Committee also helps youth groups with registration and finding premises and sponsors. Although she insisted that the authorities are a helper of civic organizations, she mentioned that sometimes conflicts also emerge, because youth groups misinterpret the authorities as a controlling organ: "We've had conflicts with youth organizations. [They are] reluctant to perceive us as

assistants. They sometimes perceived us as supervisory authorities. Although we are not, in reality. We can control them only when we allocate money from the budget to them."[7]

Co-operation between governmental bodies and civic organizations is in this repertoire portrayed as not only desirable, but essential. The officials think that this is due to Russia's social transformation as well as the need to change the forms of governance and dismantle the state's monopoly in societal issues. Nadezhda Vladimirovna defined the task of the Committee of PR and Media as attracting the public (*obshchestvennost'*) to participate in governance in order to address city issues.

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: I believe it [a dialogue between the state and civic organizations] is not just needed – it's absolutely necessary. (…) It is necessary because (…) before a decision is made, the document is subject to public assessment. Ask for advice, think it over, hand it out, publish it, let (…) citizens look and say what they find improper, what they find wrong. Then there'll be no need to reverse the resolution. You know how it happens – a decision is made and then there is negative feedback from citizens. (…) Then follow corrections, or cancellation (…). It's the totally wrong thing to do. (…) So I think this dialogue is mutually beneficial. It's equally beneficial both for the authorities and for the people. Because they [citizens] directly participate in working out and adopting the document. We know that when one has participated, one bears part of the responsibility (…). It thus stimulates the activity of the citizens themselves. (…) This dialogue with the public helps society understand that the authorities basically exist to ensure that everything is fine. (…) [People become] active citizens, active residents of the city. If you love your city, you should also contribute some effort to that [well-being of the city].

The interviewee believes that citizens and their organizations should be involved more in governance. She construes this involvement as an obligation more than a right or option: she expects citizens to take more responsibility for city affairs instead of just relying upon the authorities. The involvement of citizens and their organizations in decision-making makes them more responsible and makes the administration work more efficiently. The interviewee also thinks that consultation of citizens enhances the legitimacy of the administration in the eyes of citizens.

The officials also interpreted Russia's transformation as having increased the importance of collaboration between the state and civic groups:

SERGEI ALEKSANDROVICH: Real demand has appeared for interaction with civic organizations and the public (*obshchestvennost'*). We used to have an authoritative system of working (*sistema raboty vlastnaia*),

because orders came from the top and everybody did as they were told. Now life has changed and one has to reach an agreement (*nuzhno dogovorit'sia*). (…) A system of social partnership (*sotsial'noe partnerstvo*) is developing here and a system of social order (*sotsial'nyi zakaz*) is developing.(…) To govern the city successfully, one must know what's going on there. It's only from the people that we can get this information. (…) We, the administration, can't change anything for the better without the citizens.

Sergei Aleksandrovich outlines a partnership relationship between citizens and the authorities: the administration cannot solve problems and govern the city without the participation of citizens and civic groups. A distinction is drawn here between the Soviet and the post-Soviet forms of governance: whilst the Soviet system functioned according to a command system, the current governance has to be based on mutual agreements. The notions of social partnership and social order are employed here as manifestations of this new contractual governance.

The Social Council (*Obshchestvennyi sovet pri glave goroda*) and social units (*obshchestvennye formirovaniia*) were the key mechanisms of collaboration between civic groups and the authorities in Tver'. The Social Council was established under the auspices of mayor Belousov in 1999 and it functioned until his death in 2003. Its aim was to create a system of cooperation (*sistema vzaimodeistviia*) between the authorities, citizens and their organizations. It was an attempt to institutionalize this interaction and make use of public expertise in addressing city affairs. It gathered together the most significant civic organizations in the city.[8]

The work of the Social Council consisted of two stages. In the first instance a public forum called 'Social Living Room' (*obshchestvennaia gostiniia*) gathered. Representatives of various relevant actor groups were invited, depending on the theme. After the issue had been discussed in the Social Living Room, the Social Council gathered to discuss how to proceed with it. The Council never gathered without first hearing the views expressed in the Social Living Room. The Council had the right to make recommendations – to advise what measures the authorities should adopt and to suggest new initiatives – but it was not entitled to make decisions.

After the creation of the Social Council, a system of social units was created within the city's various administrative branches. These units drew together representatives of civic organizations, members of the city Duma, the local authorities, and the business community; in other words, the public (*obshchestvennost'*). Most of the administrative branches established their own social units, in which the relevant actor groups of that sector participated.[9] Under the auspices of the mayor a roundtable with the trade unions and a consultative council with the organizations of ethnic minorities also functioned. In 2001, a special unit, the Committee of PR and

Media, headed by Nadezhda Vladimirovna, was established in connection with the city administration. It was in charge of developing and managing interaction between civic groups and the authorities.[10]

Sergei Aleksandrovich and Nadezhda Vladimirovna employ the concept of civic society in their interviews as a discursive tool with which they articulate citizenship, in particular, in the context of social services and citizens' activation. The interviewees interpret civil society as referring to a curtailment of the state's scope of activity and an increased responsibility for citizens and their organizations. They thus posit civil society as an alternative to Soviet state paternalism.

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: [Civil society exists] when society is ready to take up part of the social functions [currently administered by the state]. Then townspeople will be the real masters of the city (…). It's when one is ready, when there's self-consciousness, civic activity is reached. So far, we mostly see the exploitative approach (*potrebitel'skoe otnoshenie*) – you owe us. You are in authority, and you owe us. (…) True, the authorities, for their part, also should be transparent and open in their activities. This trust and mutual understanding are, it seems, the basis of civil society (…). The germs of this [civil society] are already present. We see many things now that used to be non-existent.

The interviewee assigns civic organizations a subject position both in breaking the traditional model of state paternalism and in helping the local administration in tackling social issues. However, at the moment, she perceives civic groups as being still too state-oriented and having an exploitative attitude. This attitude is often repeated in the officials' interviews as a marker of citizens' 'Soviet mentality'.

The shift of formerly state-funded services to the third sector and the idea of increased individual responsibility are at the heart of neoliberal thought that arrived in Russia in the 1990s. This model had appeal in Russia, because the state could no longer provide the Soviet-type of extensive service structure. The idea of increased individual responsibility also offered an attractive alternative to the Soviet paternalist social order. However, one may reasonably ask whether the primary role assigned to civic organizations as executors of social responsibilities, as in this repertoire, would undermine their capacity to control and criticize the state and obscure their political dimension. Alvarez and her associates (1998, 1–22; see also Hemment 2004a, 820–21) in their analysis of Latin American developments argue that neoliberalism has promoted a minimalist conception of the state and engendered a service-oriented NGO sector. In this context, civic organizations function increasingly as subcontractors of the state and "buttress a public sector evacuated by the state and at the same time making it possible for the state to steer clear of what was once seen as its responsibility", as Yúdice has stated (quoted in Alvarez *et al.* 1998, 17). However, this scenario

has not yet materialized in Russia: the state still continues to play the primary role in service delivery.

The question of the redistribution of welfare responsibilities also arises in this repertoire when civic activity is articulated through empowerment. Nadezhda Vladimirovna portrayed civic groups as providing alternative expertise and services and perceived members of civic organizations as experts and subjects of their own lives. This hints at the political dimension of civic groups: potentially they can problematize existing conceptions of social problems and introduce new practices to tackle them.

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: Take Mel′nikov for example [the leader of a disabled children's organization], he at least brought the parents of disabled children together – who would know what their children need better than the parents do, right? Who would choose the wheelchair better – an official or the child's mother? Naturally, they [mothers] would perform the functions better, much better. That's why the people working in Mel′nikov's Center are mostly mothers whose children are disabled. And their attitude towards these children is different, they understand them better. They know what needs to be done.

This empowerment of citizens by giving them more say about the issues affecting their lives suggests a shift of care and social protection from the state to citizens. Hence, empowerment simultaneously legitimizes the state's withdrawal. Here we again come across the association of civic activism with motherhood discussed in Chapter 3. Nadezhda Vladimirovna portrays parents as synonymous with mothers. This is not by accident, since she and most other interviewed officials associated civic activity with femininity, and women also tend to participate more than men in civic groups in Tver′, especially in social welfare and heath care groups. Thus, this empowerment and the increasing inclusion of citizens in governance can entail that women are expected to carry out the previously state-provided care responsibilities, frequently on a voluntary basis without payment (cf. Chapter 2). The potentially empowering aspect of civic organizations is also construed in the officials' interviews by portraying organizations as providing a more humane service than governmental agencies. The latter are described as impersonal, while organizations can devote more time and offer more individual service to clients.

Although officials considered the transfer of services to civic organizations as desirable, they also saw several obstacles to it. Passive citizens and underdeveloped organizations were seen as primarily thwarting the development of civil society and collaboration between the administration and organizations. The rigidity and unresponsive nature of the administration were also referred to, but were not thought to be as significant a problem as citizens' passivity and organizational weakness. The discourse of paternalism was often at work here.

SERGEI ALEKSANDROVICH: People here are often not informed enough (…). For example, people often have no idea what issues different governmental bodies deal with, and they don't want to find out (…). Unfortunately, this is probably because of the administration's reticence and, perhaps, also because people are simply passive. They change as slowly as administrative bodies. Our society changes very slowly. Life changes, but people remain the same. (…) People here are, regrettably perhaps, not active enough in the civic sense. As a result, it looks as if there are lots of civic organizations formally, but not that many actually work. (…) A second problem is the low awareness of civic organizations in (…) legal, economic [issues], and so forth. (…) That's why we set up the technical office [in the Committee], to try to disseminate this information (…). This is our function.

In a similar vein as CGS activists, Sergei Aleksandrovich envisions a 'perestroika of the people' as a prerequisite for the development of the civic sector in Russia. He assigns the administration a key role in overcoming the shortcomings of the civic sector: the administration seeks to educate people by disseminating information. In envisioning a new citizen-subject more suitable for the post-Soviet environment, the authorities employ lifecourse metaphors. The Soviet people are portrayed as 'children' who have to 'grow up':

SERGEI ALEKSANDROVICH: Back in the Soviet Union, the authorities were occupied with a broad range of problems. Everything was decided at this level: which kindergarten kids went to, how they studied, where they worked, and where one lived (…). Now the state has passed these problems over to civil society. That is, the citizen now has to deal with that him/herself (…). For many people, however, this (…) has proved to be very heavy. It's indeed nice when someone else takes decisions for you. But when you're treated as an adult … well, it's hard when you're not prepared. (…) for instance, housing facilities in our system of communal services are gradually transferred to private hands. You [in Finland], probably have lots of private houses (…). We didn't have [them] until lately. (…) Now the state is transferring [housing facilities] to private actors in the hope that (…) there'll be competition (…). The majority of people, however, refuse to accept it so far. Because they're used to having the state deal with housing, and now they need to elect a house manager, establish condominiums, and defend their rights. It's difficult. Well, there is no other way out. The whole world lives in this way, [so] we have to do it as well.

The interviewee sees citizens' inability to act according to the new rules of game as a problem; they are still too passive, still in the process of becoming subjects. He constructs Russian social development as an inevitable process

by arguing that Russia has no other choice but to start to live in the same way as the rest of the world. Hence, Russia and Russians come to be signified as 'backward', catching up with the West.

Generation centrally articulates meanings of citizenship in this repertoire in a similar vein as in the CGS. The authorities envision a new citizen with dispositions better corresponding to the demands of post-Soviet society, and this citizen is portrayed as belonging to the post-Soviet generation. They present youth as their ally in transforming society and regard generational change as a way to overcome the obstacles of societal development. Thus, the redefinition of the citizen intertwines with a redefinition of national identity: the authorities re-evaluate the Soviet past and produce interpretations about 'who we are (not)' and 'who we should become'.

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: If one looks at the older generation, especially in our country, they're all used to the idea that someone owes them something. And they won't listen when [they are] told that we're in the market [economy] now, that nobody owes them anything (…). It's useless. (…) Youth (…), a new generation with a new mentality is coming in this respect. The mentality is changing and it's essential and it's crucial. (…) It [our older generation] is not like yours [Finnish], in our country the older generation is used to the fact that the state takes on all responsibilities and must provide everything for them. Today's younger generation relies only on itself. Basically, when [people] were asked [in a survey]: "Whose fault is the present-day situation?", many of them answered: "Mine". It's a very interesting position, meaning that they understand that the actions of virtually each one of us make a difference. You either look passively on all those things and you don't care, or you get actively involved and try to make things better in this respect. No one in the older generation would ever answer "Mine". They'll find someone to blame. (…) the state, the authorities.

The interviewee describes the post-Soviet transformation as a change of mentality in the younger generation. Two other officials argued in a similar vein that youth is capable of independent agency, because it has not been exposed to the Soviet socialization practices that have engendered paternalistic dispositions and an authoritarian culture:

ELENA PAVLOVNA: Our people lived following orders for **too long**.
TAMARA ANDREEVNA: They were waiting for some 'good guy' (*khoroshii dobryi diaden'ka*).
ELENA PAVLOVNA: (…) it was hard to convince them in schools that they should set norms themselves, organize things themselves (…). "No, you tell us what's right! You write down that things must be like that." (…) Where managers are young, however, where the burden of that years-

old authoritarianism doesn't hang over managers, there the changes are underway, and quite notably. (City's Department of Education)

In this repertoire, however, the same contradiction that emerged in the context of the CGS and the Legal Aid Clinic in Chapter 4 is also evident. On the one hand, youth is signified as a responsible and active agent of social change and the older generation as passive and state-dependent. On the other hand, the interviewees often mention how the most active participants in civic organizations are, in fact, pensioners, veterans and middle-aged women. Nadezhda Vladimirovna commented in her interview that young people do not usually participate in civic organizations, because they prefer to earn money. She explained the active participation of veterans and pensioners as follows: "It's people of the older generation who are used to sticking together, used to being part of some organization. For veterans, for pensioners – it's their life, their element. So they stay united. Although it's not the only reason. Organizations support veterans, offer some social assistance." She thus explained the active participation of the older generation as stemming from habit and their disadvantaged socio-economic position making them need of social support from civic organizations. In this way, she came to signify civic activity as a site of help and relief and as the continuation of Soviet practices of sociability. She interpreted economy as crucially structuring civic activity: whilst the young work for money, the elderly either cannot work or do not have the necessary qualifications to succeed in the market economy, and consequently they are engaged more in civic activity. However, as in the case of the CGS and the Legal Aid Clinic, Nadezhda Vladimirovna regarded the activism of the elder generation as the 'wrong' kind of activism, because it is oriented towards the state and reproduces Soviet paternalism and passive citizenship.

Civic organizations as complementing the state

In the 'complementation' repertoire, civic organizations are portrayed as patching up the state's failure and complementing governmental service delivery. The subject positions of the state and civic organizations are in a different order from those they occupy in the minimal state and extensive third sector repertoire: organizations are understood in this repertoire as a helper of the state, whilst the state is the primary agent in addressing societal issues.[11] This repertoire also calls for active citizenship, but to a more limited degree than the previous repertoire, as here the primary role of the state is retained.

In this repertoire, the officials see governmental services as steadier and financially more stable than those of civic organizations. Organizations may provide some extra and one-off services, offer help and support to people who have ended up in a state of distress and delineate problems, but it is the

authorities that ultimately make the decisions. As one of the officials put it, "it's bureaucrats who resolve things anyway. If there's no water in your building, not a single civic organization would resolve [the problem] until the administration got involved."

The idea of complementarity also manifests itself in the fact that officials portray the governmental and civic groups as operating according to a different logic. Governmental services are based on obligation, whilst organizations operate on a voluntary basis. Irina Mikhailovna from the city's Committee of Youth Affairs stated this as follows: "A civic organization works for itself. An institution **has to**, is obliged to serve the city, and is obliged to perform its mission somehow as a **social** organ (*sotsial'nyi organ*). A civic organization does that if it feels like (…). It has the right to [choose]." She gave an example of civic groups' complementing role: they had begun to deal with youth housing and to offer services to young families, because the Committee could not afford to do that.

As with the minimal state and extensive third sector repertoire, in this repertoire civic groups are perceived as alleviating the burden of the state. Officials outline the task of civic organizations as actively attracting external resources to support governmental services. Thus, rather than seeing the administrative structures as financially supporting civic groups, the officials see civic groups as conducting fundraising for the state:

KATIA: Does your Department give some material support [to education-related civic organizations]?

ELENA PAVLOVNA: No. Our aim is in a way totally different. It's the other way round, make civic organizations help raise extra-budgetary funds for education. Because the funding allocated to education (…) is very inadequate. (city's Department of Education)

Mikhail Borisovich from the regional department of social protection thought it problematic that civic organizations tend to cling too much to the state. In his view, organizations should operate independently with external funding, but at the moment they tend to function as state auxiliaries. He employed the term third sector in his interview in reference to civic organizations and their co-operation with the state and business. In his view, civic organizations and business could provide specific services in the social sector and in this way complement the state's service delivery:

MIKHAIL BORISOVICH: The third sector sometimes renders quite specific services. Narrower ones (…), the organizations have specialized in certain areas, (…) in relation to families, for water births (…). And we here [in the department] support people in all spheres [of life]. (…) the First Vice-Minister, when we attended the last meeting, declared the task [to be] that commercial structures should enter the market of social services.

(…) But certainly this would in no way mean abandoning state support (…) but as an addition.

Although the officials in this repertoire consider the state as the main agent and organizations only as complementing it, there are differences between the officials in the extent to which they wish to involve organizations in service delivery and governance:

KATIA: Do you think civic organizations should bear more responsibility for social services (…)?

VLADIMIR SERGEEVICH: No, no, I don't think they should.

MIKHAIL BORISOVICH: But how can they bear the responsibility?

KATIA: Well, take up more functions?

VLADIMIR SERGEEVICH: No, no, they shouldn't.

MIKHAIL BORISOVICH: We don't know how much they can take up. (…) They're welcome, let them take up more. If they can manage.

VLADIMIR SERGEEVICH: Well, it just won't happen, so they'd better not. That's too much.

Vladimir Sergeevich does not wish to shift any more responsibility onto organizations, whereas Mikhail Borisovich is more eager to involve the third sector, if only it was up to taking more responsibility. As in the previous repertoire, here also the lack of competence in civic organizations is perceived as the main obstacle to a deeper involvement of organizations in service delivery.

Although the officials were interested in the complementary role of civic groups, an official working in the regional department of health care was also wary of the 'democratization' of governance. He advocated the verticals of power, but with provisos:

At the moment – my attitude may change later – I think these notions are somewhat strange to us, [that] there should be an agreement, public decision, some joint symposia, congresses, compacts, deals. People power. (…). Today, we need strict power – I may be wrong though – but it should be a strict vertical power arrangement, to establish some kind of order in our country.

Representation and mediation

The relationships between the authorities and civic groups are also articulated in the repertoire of representation and mediation. Here organizations are conceived in terms of representing the public (*obshchestvennost'*) and promoting 'societal interests' vis-à-vis the state and mediating between the state and the citizens. This is also a familiar idea of Western conceptualizations of civil society. The interviewed authorities regarded civic organizations as

being closer to the people and therefore able to convey to the authorities information they cannot otherwise obtain. This was understood to improve the performance of the administration:

ELENA PAVLOVNA: One can't see from the top the whole problem as it is. So interaction [between the state and civic organizations] is certainly a must.

TAMARA ANDREEVNA: They [civic organizations] are sort of closer to [the people], and they reveal all kinds of problems. (…) [If] organizations revealed those problems and [if] we included them [organizations] in our sphere of activities, then there'd probably be some effect. (…) organizations work with, say, asocial families, where mothers are addicted to alcohol, and they strive to help these (…) mothers out. We'll be aware of them [mothers], they [organizations] will be aware, they'll help them out. (…)

ELENA PAVLOVNA: I guess civic organizations thus help reach every individual. (…) [They] render more oriented support. That's the feedback a civic organization could provide. Because essentially, the administration is meant to serve the people (*narod*), right? Satisfy their demands, their wishes. Regrettably, it's not always like that. So I believe the role of civic organizations is to act as this mediator (…). They could also organize some kind of selfless devoted activity. (city's Department of Education)

The interviewees portray organizations as helping the authorities to reach people better and direct support to them, and as sites of self-help and altruistic activity. Co-operation between organizations and the authorities is viewed as beneficial because of the different functions and roles they have. This mediating role of civic organizations is, however, constructed in the quote as a future vision; it does not exist, yet. The officials also claim that their goal is to 'serve the people', and the collaboration between the administration and civic groups is seen as helping to achieve this goal. This is an issue on which the interviewed officials and activists had different views. The activists often complained that the officials do not understand their role as serving the people, but rather tend to view citizens and civic groups as a nuisance.

   In this repertoire, a central tension is constructed between 'narrow group interests' and larger 'societal interests'. The officials were dissatisfied with the current stage of civic activism in Tver′. They saw it as especially problematic that organizations represent and work around 'particularistic interests' – the interests of the members of the organization – because they were seen as a too narrow scope for organizational activity. Organizations do not tackle enough 'socially significant' issues and problems. As Sergei Aleksandrovich from the city's Committee of PR and Media put it, "organizations pursue their own narrow interests, but we try to move up them to a new level of development. These organizations should deal with problems

that concern the city as a whole rather than just the narrow problems of a limited group." Another official also presented civic groups as introverted and having "a clubbish' nature (*tusovka*)" and suggested that these groups should orient their activities to dealing with "socially significant problems".

What is then meant by 'socially significant', and what interests come to be included in this category? The officials articulate socially significant problems and societal interests in terms of locality: civic organizations are assigned the task of solving local problems and enhancing local governance. The officials perceive civic groups, townspeople, and the authorities as having a common interest: the good of the locality. They do not conceive the role of civic groups as mobilizing around and advocating interests of certain social groups, but rather as pursuing the local interests supposedly common to all. Since these local interests are conceived as common interests, the officials do not understand civic groups as a critical counterforce to the local government. The authorities see the task of civic groups as being to realize projects that the authorities deem important and relevant. Thus, they do not approach civic groups as loci of citizens' self-organization around interests and needs that citizens *themselves* define as important. The authorities and activists seem to have different interpretations of what types of activities are 'socially significant' and meaningful. Whereas the officials define as socially significant projects those activities that solve local problems and alleviate the burden of the state, citizens often establish organizations in order to help themselves. They institutionalize their personal social networks and thereby seek to convert social capital into economic capital by claiming state and foreign donor support (cf. Chapter 2). In addition, they can also pursue goals that are not only limited to some specifically local problems, as is the case with the CGS with its feminist agenda.

Whereas a number of interviewed civic activists narrated for civic organizations the subject position of an agent of education (see Chapter 4), in this repertoire the authorities are constructed as 'educating' the citizens to pursue wider societal interests.

SERGEI ALEKSANDROVICH: We [Committee of PR and Media] should inform them [citizens], teach them, and they should absorb this information and this teaching. That's, in fact, why we established this Committee, to collaborate. Because these are common problems and we can solve them only together. (…) because objectively we're better informed here, better trained. We should convey this information, these skills, this knowledge to people, to society, as much as possible.

Here the authorities, rather than civic groups, are considered the key force engendering change in the organizational sector. In his interview, Sergei Aleksandrovich conveyed the impression that he was sincerely interested in developing interaction between the authorities and civic organizations and deemed it important, but at the same time he constructed a hierarchical

relationship between the two: the authorities have the necessary competence and they are the source of ideas and education, while the organizations are merely the recipients of this education. Interaction was thus portrayed as unilateral rather than reciprocal.

The authorities were narrated in the interviews not only as educating the activists, but also as manipulating them, directing them to organize in the way the authorities want:

IRINA MIKHAILOVNA: There used to be two monopoly organizations: the Pioneer and Komsomol organizations (…). [After that] small organizations started emerging. (…) Each with its own sort of mentality, with its own orientation. And we gathered them together for the first time, we thought it would be easier to deal with problems together. There was such a clamour – we don't want to get united, we want independence, we want (…) [to do] everything ourselves! (…) So, little by little [we] oriented them in a way towards our city problems, because it's important for us that these organizations work on projects of social significance to the city. (…) Well, it took us three years to set them on the track, and in three years they themselves developed a will to unite. (city's Committee of Youth Affairs)

The interviewee describes how after the break-up of Soviet structures civic organizations were keen to act independently and not form any hierarchical and united mass organizations. She portrays in her quote the authorities as discreet manipulators, subtly 'weaning' organizations away from this attitude, making them join forces and channeling them to realize 'socially significant projects'. In her interview, Irina Mikhailovna conveyed an impression of being genuinely interested in collaborating with youth groups and emphasized that the authorities need to trust youngsters, but she did not see anything wrong in this active role of the authorities in shaping youth activism. She perceived as problematic the phenomenon of the mushrooming of small-scale independent organizations that, for example, the members of the CGS perceived as a positive sign of citizens' self-organization.

Can organizations make a difference?

How did the authorities understand the influence of civic organizations in Tver'? On what issues did they think organizations could have influence? We can discern three ways in which civic groups can try to make a difference. They can seek to influence citizens (*individual influence*); the state, decision-making and business (*institutional influence*); and public opinion (*public sphere influence*).[12] These three forms can simultaneously be understood as the ways in which civic groups may enhance democracy (Warren 2001).

Individual influence means that civic organizations can develop individuals' sense of efficacy and belief that collective action can make a difference.

Organizations can collect and organize information that educates individuals about matters relevant to them, and develop political and critical skills, such as negotiation, and critical thinking. *Institutional influence* refers to the capacity of organizations to influence governance and decision-making and to function as a counterweight to the state. Organizations can exert institutional influence by representing their members/constituencies and speaking for their behalf vis-à-vis the state and business. They can also provide people with infrastructure and means to resist and organize collective actions and they have the potential to underwrite the legitimacy of the state by giving citizens the opportunity to influence political outcomes. *Public sphere influence*, for its part, means that associations may contribute to the formation of public opinion by providing the social infrastructure of public spheres that develop agendas and provide voice (Warren 2001). The role of the mass media is crucial in this respect. Associations can nudge issues into public consciousness and offer explanations that supplement, reinforce or oppose the terms that are dominant in public discussion (ibid., 81). In this way, they may potentially change the parameters of public debate.

The officials in Tverʹ mainly articulated civic groups' influence via a *lack of it*. They interpreted civic organizations' lack of activism and professionalism and citizens' paternalistic dispositions as hindering organizations' opportunities to exert influence.

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: The problem is that most civic organizations still work exactly as civic organizations. They haven't mastered modern methods of fund-raising, of organizing their activities at a certain level. That's the source of the disease affecting these organizations, which constantly say: "nobody helps us, nobody supports us, we're so good, look how wonderful we are". But they don't do anything themselves. One must be able to manage one's own organization (…). The leaders of civic organizations lack professionalism. (…). Even, say, getting a grant. There are a number of civic organizations [in Tverʹ], but they simply don't know how this [applying for a grant] is done, and don't want to learn. (…) It's sort of an exploitative (*potrebitelʹskoe*) approach to these things. (…) There are organizations here that come to us and say straight away: "Oh, help us set up an office, help us get a telephone connection." (…) In this case I always ask: "Tell me, please, did anyone force you to found this organization? (…)" This is a **civic** organization, first and foremost. (…) I believe this fear [of independence] is the problem of those organizations that lack self-reliance. Self-reliant organizations, (…) they'd never have this fear. (…) They [organizations of disabled people] are probably not that much civic initially, because they get support from the state, too. But purely civic organizations also exist; a purely civic organization, its work relies on grants and it works in direct contact with the authorities. (city's Committee of PR and Media)

The concept of a civic organization acquires two meanings in the quote. On the one hand, it is defined to mean self-reliance and independence, but, on the other hand, it is also has connotations of amateurish action. 'Real' civic organizations do not receive funding from the state, they are capable of conducting fundraising and using other modern methods in their activities, and they co-operate with the authorities. The interviewed officials also complained that civic organizations cannot realize state-funded projects, because they do not have the necessary skills and capacities. The majority of the administrative structures involved in this study had organized competitions for civic organizations for realizing projects. Nadezhda Vladimirovna summarized the disappointment of many of the interviewed officials:

NADEZHDA VLADIMIROVNA: The city's Social Security Department announced a competition among civic organizations (…) with pretty good financial support. And it turned out that the **problem** was that very few organizations could suggest a realistic project! (…) I mean, civic organizations are still weak. (…) The initiative of civic organizations concerning legislation is still low. Our organizations seem to have not matured (*ne dorosli*) enough somehow. They probably haven't realized that they can influence changes in laws and passing new laws. (…) It's possible to exert influence, but it's not being done yet. (…) Civic organizations themselves don't come up with such initiatives.

Officials tended to hold civic groups responsible for their lack of influence. In their view, organizations' influence depends entirely on their own efforts and energy. The administration was not usually regarded as hindering organizations in the exercise of their influence. A few officials did hint in their interviews at the shortcomings of the administration, but they saw it as a secondary problem compared to the lack of initiative and activity from the side of organizations.

This alleged lack of professionalism in civic organizations and its negative effect on their ability to exert influence in society emerges as a central theme in the interviews not only with officials, but also with civic activists. It is also a recurrent theme in academic studies and accounts of foreign donors concerning the Russian civic sector (see e.g. Pashina 2004; Zdravomyslova 2005; Gorodetskaia 1998). This professionalism discourse is revealing of how civic activity is understood. Civic activity is constructed as an activity for professionals who can devote a substantial amount of time to it, giving civic activity a flavour of elitism (cf. Alapuro 2005, 22).[13] Civic activity is not perceived as being based on amateurishness and providing channels for participation for all citizens, but rather it is presented as the "*work of a specialist*" (Pashina 2004, 33) and a *career* that requires a certain level of education and special skills. This understanding of civic activity, I believe, can also explain the dominance of the educated class in civic organizations. The demand for professionalism runs the risk of excluding social groups

that lack the necessary cultural capital from exercising political citizenship. The authorities in Tver′ did not consider how organizations could become more professional in a situation where they do not have permanent funding and when fundraising is difficult because of the low standard of living in the region. They were also silent about the implications of widespread poverty for civic participation.

Did the officials give any examples of how civic organizations could exert influence or have done so? Most often they portrayed civic organizations as having individual influence on specific social groups: organizations can offer help and support to people and function as sites of sociability. Organizations' institutional influence, by contrast, was seen as weak. Organizations were seen as having some institutional influence via the Social Council and social units. Irina Mikhailovna gave two examples of civic groups' influence on governmental and business structures:

IRINA MIKHAILOVNA: Youth organizations do already have influence (…), even on business. (…) There are lots of shops selling sports goods here (…) and a lot depends on our civic organizations, to which businessman I choose to go (…). Student organizations can also have influence. (…) We have one strong organization among all civic organizations: it's the students' trade union. Well, when they had some confusion with scholarships, students did walk out, from all institutions of higher education, and stood in front of the regional administration with slogans and placards. Although university administrations, in fact, had clear instructions to do everything to prevent this act (*laugh*) of 'vandalism'. But nobody got intimidated; they gathered and walked out, because they were fighting for their rights.

The interviewed officials mentioned veterans' and disabled people's organizations as having institutional influence in Tver′. For example, a disabled people's group, 'Tan′iusha', had initiated a project about a local law for the installation of ramps for wheelchairs. The leader of this organization also advised the city architecture department on how to take the needs of disabled people into account when building houses.

Civic organizations' attempts to exercise institutional influence were also occasionally portrayed in a negative light. Organizations were considered as dishonestly canvassing votes during elections in order to further their own political purposes:

MASHA: Do these [civic] organizations have influence in Tver′?
IURII IVANOVICH: Well, why not? (…) I always feel it when elections are coming. When there are elections (*laughs*), civic organizations would promise anything to people. (…) Foundations are set up (…) for pensioner support. They sound very good. These (…) foundations are meant only for the election period. To give five or six rubles, get the

vote and then forget about the pensioner. I feel very critical about them, with no respect. It's bribery of people (*podkup liudei*).

Nadezhda Vladimirovna also referred to this theme of exploitation for political purposes in her interview, but unlike the previous interviewee, she portrayed civic organizations as victims of this exploitation. In her view, during elections some local politicians look to organizations to support them and make promises to pursue their interests – only to forget about them after the elections. The interviewed activists in Tver′ also often voiced this argument. This is interesting from the point of view of gender. Both the activists and officials signified civic activity as feminine and politics as masculine, so consequently the feminine realm comes to be portrayed as being exploited by the masculine realm.

   Some interviewed officials considered contemporary civic organizations to have less importance and influence than Soviet societal organizations. They felt that citizens were more vulnerable and unprotected today, because there were no such bodies as there used to be in the Soviet Union that defended the rights of citizens. In the opinion of one of the interviewed officials, Soviet society had certain structures, such as the trade unions and party committees, that defended the individual against bureaucracy and officials (*chinovniki*).[14] These structures were able, at least to a limited degree, to operate as mediators between the bureaucratic machinery and ordinary Soviet citizens and defend the individual. In this respect they were portrayed as having similar functions to those of civil society organizations in Western societies. The official frequently portrayed Soviet citizens as conscious of and actively defending their rights. In this way, he presented a counternarrative to the paternalism discourse that constructs Soviet people as passive and ignorant of their rights:

MASHA: Do the townspeople often turn to you with questions concerning health care?

IURII IVANOVICH: Often. (…) You know, [they're] mostly elderly people. Reading their letters one must have a heart of stone. They write their life stories (…) and say: "We had lived expecting well-being in our old age, but reached old age getting nothing." (…) these letters, people actually write: "help!", I've never read letters like that before. As long as I've worked here, they always wrote: "give me, we demand, if you don't, I'll write to the *Gorkom* [city party committee], to the *Raikom* [district part committee], I'll write to the trade unions", and now they actually beg: dear Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, please help me financially to have surgery in Moscow. (…) And now this thing appeared, this kind of new … it's probably not a good thing to say, but new dependent politics (*izhdivenchekaia politika*) among our people. (…) Why so? Out of despair, I guess. I know for myself I can't earn ten thousand dollars for, say, coronary artery bypass grafting (…). [Let's

assume] it's my son, he's sitting back at home, I see him every day, I need to help him somehow – what am I supposed to do? (…) It means I have to write to someone, President or MP, people write a lot to Zhirinovsky. (…) people write to deputies a lot. You are a deputy, you're smart, you're good, you look rich (…). Come on, give us a little money. They write to gangsters (*bandity*). (…) From my humble experience, I've noticed that there's this dependent politics today. It's our problem (…) although let me repeat, I'm ready to say it out loud in the street that I supported Soviet power … I grew up [with it], I can't oppose it, it would be like killing myself, you see, if I now say bad things about Soviet power. But it's the trouble of Soviet power that we used to tell people all the time: "Don't think about anything, don't think about your health – medical institutions, the Party and the government will think for you". (…) A person should first of all take efforts to take care of him/herself. (…) I'm interested in my health, I must be healthy enough to earn money, to have children, get married, and so on. But what we had was: "Don't stir, don't move, don't be afraid, we'll do everything for you", and I got used to it. (…) this [Soviet] generation is not gone yet, it hasn't died out yet. I'm yelling today and saying: "Give it to us, you've promised!" But who do you think is going to give you anything? (Regional Department of Health Care)

It is telling that Iurii Ivanovich makes no mention of citizens' collective action as a way to solve problems, i.e., that people would establish a civic organization and fight for social justice in that way. Instead, he draws a picture of survival strategies based on patronage and paternalism. The Soviet practice of petitioning 'a patron' is reproduced, but the patrons have partly changed, as people are also said to write to gangsters. In his view, a new kind of 'dependent' behaviour among Russians has developed, which he interprets as stemming from poverty and Soviet state paternalism.[15] He rethinks the Soviet citizenship model and, as was the case with a number of other interviewed officials, calls for increased individual responsibility. However, this emphasis on individual responsibility and initiative should not be interpreted as a manifestation of the endorsement of neoliberalism, but as a reaction to Soviet state paternalism and its displacement in contemporary Russia.

Conclusion

The authorities articulate the relationships between the state, citizens and civic organizations in three interpretative repertoires: the minimal state and extensive third sector repertoire; the 'complementation' repertoire; and the representation and mediation repertoire. All these repertoires call for active citizenship, albeit to different degrees. The officials understand civic groups as helpers of the state, not as a political and critical counterweight to the

state. They define the task of civic organizations as being to alleviate the burden of the state and improve governance by carrying out socially significant projects, producing such social services that the administration cannot or does not wish to offer, channeling citizens' aspirations to the power structures, activating citizens, and by attracting external funding to governmental services. Civic groups' active participation in particular in the provision of social services is beneficial for the authorities as they may in this way contain citizens' discontent with the state and help to maintain social peace. The officials define the *raison d'être* of civic organizations from the viewpoint of the needs of the state, continuing in this sense the tradition of state-centered social development in Russia. They reproduce the Soviet societal postulate of the primacy of the interests of the collective – local community – defined by the state vis-à-vis the interests of the individual.

The minimal state and extensive third sector repertoire portrays civic organizations as the main agents in producing services and solving societal problems and the state as a helper of organizations in performing this task. The role of the organizations is seen as *compensating* the state. The repertoire calls for increased individual and organizational responsibility and a curtailment of the state's role. Civil society is here posited as an alternative model to Soviet state paternalism. This repertoire simultaneously emphasizes the *obligation* of citizens to participate in governance, and the *opportunities* for citizens to participate in governance and become subjects of their own lives. In the complementation repertoire, by contrast, civic organizations are portrayed as *supplementing* governmental service delivery. Here organizations are understood as helpmates of the state, whereas the state is defined as the primary agent. This repertoire draws on the Soviet tradition of social provision and also resembles the debate in Nordic countries on the increasing role of the third sector in supplementing governmental services. It is interesting that in neither repertoire was the market assigned a significant role in service delivery in the spirit of classical liberalism. Neither was it stated that families should bear the main responsibility for social protection.

The third repertoire, representation and mediation, portrays organizations as promoting 'societal interests' and mediating between the grassroots level and the power structures. A distinction is drawn between societal interests and narrow group interests, which is reminiscent of the Soviet concern for 'false collectivism': 'real' collectives were defined as serving socially defined goals, whilst false collectives pursued selfish, narrow group interests (Ashwin 1999, 9–10). The authorities and civic organizations seem to have a different understanding of what types of activities are socially significant. For officials, socially significant means activities that improve the situation in the city and the region and alleviate the burden of the state, while citizens often found organizations in order to help themselves and organize around issues they find important.

In all three repertoires, civic activity and collaboration between authorities and civic groups are articulated in the framework of *the city and the region*. Citizenship is thus defined as *local* citizenship. The federal level does not emerge as an important framework for the exercise of citizenship; in fact, there is silence on the federal state as a whole in the repertoires. This is notable, since the primary site of Soviet citizenship was the Soviet state: citizens were to serve the state as an All-Union entity and the mythical imagined community of *Rodina*, motherland. Against this background it is interesting that in the officials' interviews the locality emerges as the primary frame of citizenship.

The community constituted in the authorities' interpretative repertoires tends to have a homogenizing tendency. The community is portrayed ideally as a unitary entity, in which the interests and needs of citizens are congruent and harmonious with those of the state. Hence, community is not understood as an arena of pluralistic interest representation and struggle. The fact that some officials complain that citizens do not organize in the way they 'should', i.e., that they insufficiently address issues that the authorities regard as relevant for the locality, implies a tendency to suppress self-organization around issues that citizens deem relevant. Instead the authorities are keen to position themselves as the proper power to define the boundaries of 'real' civic activity and the needs and interests of the community. Thus, the citizenship model constructed by officials can be called *state-determined citizenship*.

The definitions of what civic organizations are and what they should do are often constructed in the interviews by highlighting what they are *not* and what they do *not* do. Through this process of negation, the authorities produce interpretations about 'ideal' civic organizations. This ideal organization has the following features: it is independent of the state both financially and mentally; it co-operates closely with administrative bodies; it is professional, responsible, active and not paternalistic; it functions mainly on non-state funding; it works for the 'common good' of the locality and articulates and promotes societal interests; and it forges horizontal relationships with other civic groups instead of clinging to the state. The authorities do not perceive civic groups as exerting significant influence in society, a lack of efficacy which is mainly understood to stem from civic groups' passive and unprofessional nature.

7   Collaboration and contestation
Views of the activists

This chapter discusses the relationships between the authorities and civic organizations from the point of view of activists. I examine how the activists position their organization vis-à-vis the authorities and how they assess their opportunities for influence. I mainly examine the topic through the eyes of CGS and TUHW, but I also draw on the survey and thematic interviews with other organizations.

The CGS and the TUHW position themselves and are positioned vis-à-vis the authorities very differently because of their different histories, goals and identities. The CGS cultivates more horizontal networks with civic organizations, while the TUHW gravitates towards the state. The CGS mainly co-operates with the city administration and the State University, while the TUHW co-operates with both executive and legislative powers at municipal, regional and federal levels. We can identify five interpretative repertoires in the interviews with CGS and TUHW activists that construct different subject positions for the organizations and the authorities. CGS members articulate their relationships with the authorities in the repertoires of 'tactical collaboration'; 'partnership'; and 'benevolent indifference and exploitation'. The TUHW's relationships with the authorities are constructed in the repertoires of 'collaboration and consensus' and 'contestation and opposition'. These same repertoires were also repeated in the interviews with other civic groups in Tver'.

Tactical collaboration and the strategy of involvement

In the tactical collaboration repertoire, the CGS's relationships with the authorities are articulated in the framework reminiscent of de Certeau's (1984) distinction between a strategy and a tactic. The CGS is constructed as tactically using the authorities as a resource in the strategic grid set by the powers-that-be. The most important element of this tactical collaboration is the strategy of involvement (*strategiia vovlecheniia*). Valentina Ivanovna summarized the rationale of this strategy as follows:

We use (*pol'zuemsia*) the authorities for our goals. We involve them in our projects and then they start to consider these projects already as theirs. And

it will be difficult for them to refuse to help when they are themselves participants, involved.

With this strategy the CGS also seeks to reduce its dependency on foreign donors and make use of the governmental resources available at the local level.

The strategy of involvement relies upon the utilization of personalized patron–client relationships, that is, "asymmetric, but mutually beneficial transactions that are based on differential controls by social actors over the access and flow of resources" (Roniger 1998, 72). Patronage links together institutional hierarchies and personal relationships: personal relations are used for political ends (Ledeneva 1998, 53–56). Patron–client interaction patterns are not generalized and universal but personalized and particularistic. They are marked by inequality in power and resources and rely on the benevolence of the patron – benevolence that may wither, and the patron may also change. Thus, patron–client relationships are always fragile and fuzzy. The importance of patron–client arrangements was manifested in many civic organizations in Tver′ and these arrangements are also widespread in the Russian civic sector, in general (see Yanitsky 2000, 143; Sevortyan and Barchukova 2002; Sundstrom 2006). They can be interpreted as reproducing the personalization of the bureaucratic system characteristic of the Soviet system. Civic groups make use of patronage in gaining access to various public resources. Lagerspetz and his associates (2002, 85) contend that post-socialist political life in general tends to build on patron–client relationships.

The strategy of involvement in the CGS is based on *interpersonal* instead of *inter-institutional* relations. The co-operation takes place between Valentina Ivanovna, on the one hand, and the mayor and the head of the city's Committee of PR and Media, on the other. This personalized interaction was interpreted in the CGS to be of central importance in Russian culture. The authorities were seen as not listening to political and civic *groups*, but only to specific *individuals*:

SUVI: What kind of relationship does the Center have with the local authorities?
BORIS ANTONOVICH: They exist at the level of the Center's leader, Valentina Ivanovna (…). At the mayor's office, she gets along there easily. They sort of know her there and accept her. (…) The Center itself doesn't approach [the authorities]. (…) But that's how our country is. No one would listen to the organization anyway, if the person was unknown.

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: The mayor or the governor, they listen not to some political forces, but to specific people who have some (…) influence on them. (…) They are influenced by informal connections rather than by formal political actions, for example, those regularly organized here by the Communist Party. This informal resource, phone calls, personal

meetings, hunting in the woods, saunas. These are the things, I think, that influence the political system far more significantly than anything else.

Ekaterina Nikolaevna points to the gendered nature of influence in her quote: politically meaningful connections are often forged in the masculine networks of hunting and sauna. Boris Antonovich said in his interview that personal connections hinder the democratization process in Russia. In his opinion, the division of powers so that each power would control each other does not work in Russia, "because our country is still governed by the system of personal contacts (*sistema lichnykh sviazei*) and informal relationships".

The importance of personal connections in Russia is linked with the weakness and uninstitutionalized nature of co-operation between the authorities and civic organizations. Legislation regulating co-operation is still often inadequate and regionally diverse, and well-established rules of the legislative game have not often developed. The prevalence of inter-personal relations over inter-institutional ones means that changes in the administrative staff and the organization leadership can significantly alter co-operation practices, making co-operation fragile. It also indicates the personalization of public relations, which blurs the line between public and private domains. The public is privately appropriated and political relations become perceived as extensions of private relations.

The strategy of involvement as tactical action means that the CGS plays with the rules of the game set by the dominant political culture, but it tries to play a *different* game. The CGS seeks to manipulate those practices and symbols produced by the systems of power for their own purposes. In this sense, using a patron–client constellation can be seen to have a flavour of 'beating the system' (Ledeneva 1998) reminiscent of the Soviet era. CGS activists did not, as such, endorse the strategy of involvement, precisely because they realized that they end up sustaining the very same pattern of leader-centeredness and patron–client arrangements that they are trying to break away from. However, they saw this strategy as a useful and necessary one for advancing the goals of the Center in the current political circumstances.

CGS members did not ascribe to their organization the role of a pressure group. They portrayed the Center as avoiding conflicts and confrontation with the authorities. Marina Grigorievna commented as follows: "What conflicts could there be [between the authorities and the CGS]? Valentina Ivanovna is wise enough to avoid whatever tension may arise and not to look for trouble. Eventually, it would only harm the Center and her cause."[1] The activists of the student human rights organization in Tver′ considered in a similar vein confrontation with the authorities as unhelpful. In a manner reminiscent of the CGS's strategy of involvement, they argued that civic organizations should work with the authorities diplomatically, offer

their help and 'infiltrate' their ideas to the power structures instead of openly criticizing the authorities.

The university administration is an even more important governmental partner for the CGS than the city administration, as the Center is part of the university structure. The CGS also practices the strategy of involvement in relation to the university. The CGS's existence under the auspices of the university, and thus its ability to draw on its resources, ultimately depends on the benevolence of the university administration. Thus far the administration has supported the Center and has not interfered in its activities. The fact that the university administration perceives the CGS positively was interpreted in the group to be due to the grants that it has managed to secure, which are most welcome in the impoverished state-funded university.[2] The ability of the CGS to make use of the 'feminist niche' in international funding has provided it with symbolic capital in the eyes of the university administration. However, Ekaterina Nikolaevna saw potential dangers in the close co-operation with the university. She was afraid that the administration views the CGS positively only as long as it can attract external funding:

> [If funding ceases to flow] the university administration perhaps may then not shut us down, but it will at least have the arguments to wind up the structure itself as being inadequate. I mean, they'd say for example: 'If you don't earn money, we can take rooms away from you.' So while we get grants, they keep silent.

The CGS has, however, prepared itself for this scenario. Valentina Ivanovna has used her position to advance CGS participants at the State University, in order to ensure that in the decision-making posts there will be people who will protect the group.

Partnership and the redefinition of responsibilities

CGS members also represent their relationships with the authorities as a partnership based on mutually beneficial collaboration. This repertoire emerged in two contexts and only in the interviews conducted in 2001. It was employed when describing collaboration between the CGS and the city administration, and in the context of the redefinition of the division of labor between the state and civic organizations in service delivery.

In 2001, Raisa Borisovna and Valentina Ivanovna commended the relationships with the city administration, mainly due to the newly established Social Council under the auspices of the mayor, in which the CGS was a member.[3] Raisa Borisovna commented that "the city administration is well-disposed towards us. There's nothing to complain about. I can't remember them refuse us anything we really asked for." In her view, the Social Council could make a difference and its opinions were listened to. She portrayed the

Council as a mechanism enhancing governance by making the authorities accountable to citizens. For her, the Social Council was also a tangible evidence of the gradual development of civil society:

RAISA BORISOVNA: We're heard, let's put it like that. Also, we have a chance to come up with recommendations. (…) We can say that we expressed our advice, but no one listened and it turned out badly. (…) We can say: these are the problems that have to be dealt with! And we have the right to ask any official to come, and they must report to us. We pass a resolution, and we can summon the official again later. Then s/he must report to us again. And our mayor is nearly always present there. We have the right to raise this problem again, if we're not satisfied. (…) Once the problem has been raised, if it's been thoroughly introduced through the media, everybody would know about it. (…) I think it [Social Council] is another piece of the newborn civil society.

Regarding the distribution of welfare responsibilities, all CGS members assigned the state the primary role in service delivery, but some of them also advocated the idea of organizations and the state producing services together, in 'social partnership'.[4] Civic organizations were represented as complementing the state by helping to deliver specific services. This echoes the 'complementation repertoire' put forward by officials in the previous chapter. The stress on the necessity of co-operation between different sectors marks a break from the Soviet state monopoly in solving societal problems.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: My opinion is that there certainly should be municipal services. That is, the state must invest resources (…) in the development of these services. On the other hand, this is also a function of civic organizations. I mean, together (…). For example, we would now like to have a shelter in addition to the Crisis Center. (…) But a civic organization has no chance to get a grant for that and we're now trying to make the city to open [the shelter]. So I think, it should be co-operation, this social partnership. Governmental organizations and NGOs. (…) This requires, however, more trust in state services on the part of society and, on the other hand, the state should also trust its citizens. (…) One may notice that some gaps are filled by civic organizations. (…) Where there is a problem, some mechanisms have to be worked out to resolve it. Some civic organizations take up the functions of municipal bodies, and do the work instead of them for free, and to better effect. (…) by joining forces we may probably do the work very effectively.

CGS activists delineated two factors that distinguish between governmental and private sector services and services offered by civic organizations: organizations operate altruistically and are less hierarchical and bureaucratic than the governmental ones, but they are also amateurish and lack

qualified staff. In contrast, governmental and private sectors render professional service.

MARINA GRIGORIEVNA: Organizations very often provide help for free, and that's why it's provided by less competent (…) people (…). Experts (…) most often provide help either at the municipal or at some other, private level, and get money for that. That's probably why the help rendered by civic organizations is inferior. On the other hand, the mission of civic organizations is to lend invaluable support to people, (…) concrete help. In this sense [in] civic organizations (…) there's less bureaucracy, they're closer to people.

CGS activists were sceptical about the possibility of shifting more responsibility for service delivery to civic groups. They explained this by the fact that people do not have enough time to participate in organizations and that organizations lack necessary material resources. The following quote again elucidates how centrally the economy is understood to condition civic activity. Work in a civic organization is portrayed as a privilege that citizens in more affluent societies can afford to exercise.

KATIA: What do you think, should civic organizations bear even more responsibility for social services?

VIKTORIIA IVANOVNA: Well, if we together founded an organization to help disabled people, it would surely be great. But neither of us has the time or vigour for that – right? The thing is, as I understand it, in Western countries, in Germany for instance, pensioners are much involved (…) in civic organizations. (…) But pensioners in the West can afford it, they don't have the problem of how to sustain themselves day in and day out. I mean, they're well provided for, they can devote themselves to working **for others**. (…) Pensioners here, in addition to getting their meagre pensions, also need to find money somehow to survive. That's where the problem is.

TUHW members did not put forward this type of redefinition of welfare responsibilities. In fact, when we queried them about this issue in the interviews, the question seemed incomprehensible to them. They did not envision a shared responsibility between the state and civic groups in service delivery or increased individual and civic responsibility. TUHW interviewees did react to the curtailment of the scope of governmental service delivery, but instead of suggesting an increase in the role of the 'third sector' or self-help, they posited as a desirable model a state with extensive welfare obligations reminiscent of the Soviet system or Nordic welfare state. The youngest *profkom* president was the only exception to this rule. He began to reflect upon the question of the redefinition of welfare in his interview and took a positive stand towards increased civic participation in health services:

ANDREI PAVLOVICH: Well, in this sense, it's still all very poorly developed [civic organizations in health care issues], in the city, I think. I'm not even sure we have any specific organizations here … Well, certain attempts are made, for instance, by disabled children's parents to join together (…). This aspect should certainly be developed, some structures should be created … Naturally, it would be easier, I guess, to deal with rehabilitation and some of the social problems of such children [if there were such civic organizations].

Benevolent indifference and exploitation

CGS members portrayed the authorities as regarding their Center with benevolent indifference and as using it for their own purposes. In this repertoire, the CGS was assigned a subject position of an odd but harmless actor: its activities are something that the authorities do not understand, but they are not considered as a threat either. According to CGS members, the Center has never experienced any conflicts with the authorities. This indifference was seen as a lesser evil than active interference and control.

Whereas in the tactical collaboration repertoire the CGS was portrayed as using the authorities as a resource, in this repertoire the CGS is described as a resource the authorities use for their own purposes. When, for example, foreign delegations arrive at Tver′, the CGS is called out in order to polish the reputation of the administration. The authorities were also portrayed as manipulating civic activity by collecting around them loyal pocket organizations (*karmannye organizatsii*). This is an example of selective partnership: the authorities support organizations that are expected to be obedient to the authorities in return for co-operation. As one of the CGS activists put it, "The state always strives to have pliable civic organizations. I think the state will make efforts to have civic organizations that are under control, that will say: 'Yes, madam'."

CGS members gave an example of the ways in which the regional authorities had tried to use them for their own purposes. Once the administration was obliged to report to the federal government what had been done in Tver′ in order to enhance women's positions in society. According to Valentina Ivanovna, the officials panicked and asked her to inform them what measures had been adopted in this area. Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna recalled this as follows:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: They would call me from the regional administration and ask: "Valentina Ivanovna, what has been done here? Have any laws been passed here?"

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: See, it's us who are supposed to call them and ask what they have passed. But they call Valentina Ivanovna instead!

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: Just imagine! I found the document for them stating that all regional administrations had received the presidential decree

(…). "Could you make a copy for us?" [she said] – "You're welcome" [I said]. (*all laughing*)

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: Can you imagine, we took the document to them for them to make a copy.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: The document stipulated all budget items, things we were to spend money on.

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: And they've already spent all the money. (*all laughing*)

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: (…) So I made them happy – I gave them the decree so that they could write the report. Imagine that? Boy, it's hilarious. (*all laughing*) (…) I mean, organizations such as our Center, for instance, are wanted only on very specific occasions. Otherwise – they couldn't care less (*A tak – sto let ne nuzhno*).

The CGS's co-operation with regional authorities has also been hampered by differences in gender ideologies. In her interview Valentina Ivanovna told about her experience in a governmental 'Commission for issues of women, family and childhood', which was established in Tver′ in the wake of the UN women's conference in Beijing. She voiced her discontent with the name and scope of this Commission: the eternal lumping together of 'women–children–family'. She also perceived the rationale behind the founding of this Commission as such that she was not able to endorse it. She recalled the founding meeting of the Commission:

What was saddest, when [the meeting] was nearing its end, the Vice-Governor says: "Well, it's great that we've set up the Commission today, and I hope that our work will help raise the number of births in our region." I thought – stop! I put my hand on his shoulder and said – wait. "Girls, they want to use us!" (*laughing*) So, that's the kind of attempt of co-operation we had.

Another example of this exploitative attitude was given about the attempt to establish an information center under the auspices of the city administration. Valentina Ivanovna suggested this idea to the mayor who endorsed it, but in a different form: established and maintained by civic groups and not by the authorities. Valentina Ivanovna and Sofiia Vladimirovna interpreted this as yet another manifestation of the authorities' inclination to put all the responsibilities onto civic groups instead of collaborating with them:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: [Mayor] Belousov told me personally – (…) we'll surely, we'll do so [establish the information center]! But he said straight away [that] it [the center] would hardly be [located] in the city hall – because I'd have insisted it should be in the city center. (…) Citizens should know that there's a place in the city where they can come and get information. And civic organizations know [that] there's a place where I can learn about others, disseminate my own information. And

he [mayor] said right away it would hardly be in the same place [in the city hall]: "Well, maybe we'll allocate you another room." **You**.

SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: But the idea was that they would allocate it. It was they who were supposed to do it. (…) And now it turns out, **you** have to do it.

At the federal level, one of the most salient, and at the same time ambivalent, attempts to establish co-operation between the state and civic groups was the Civic Forum held in Moscow in 2001. Valentina Ivanovna perceived this Forum as a way in which the authorities could pay lip service to the idea of civil society, without any real attempt to empower civic organizations. She had received an invitation to participate in the Forum, but as a sign of protest refused to go. She explained that the "the way it [the Forum] is being done, it's disgusting anyway. I didn't like his [Putin's] way of trying to build civil society within three days in Moscow. Three days of forum in Moscow, and bang – here's civil society." Another CGS activist also commented that the state merely tries to take advantage of organizations on the pretext of 'dialogue': "This dialogue is like a courtesy dropped to civic organizations showing that we do see you, hear you, but we're going to act the way we find proper. You can have your say, but [in the end] we'll do as we please."

CGS members also articulated the Center's relationships with legislative power and political parties in this repertoire of exploitation. The group does not co-operate with parties or legislatures and neither is there desire for it. The elder members of the CGS voiced strong aversion towards political parties because of the Soviet past. Furthermore, the current parties were perceived all too often to resemble the CPSU. Politics was, in general, portrayed in a negative light. Raisa Borisovna's quote illustrates this well:

Look, I've no hot water at home! Our deputy is a drunkard! He was fired for drinking. He's now on vacation. As a result, I and other residents run around, struggle, write petitions!! Where's my deputy?! Drinking vodka somewhere. That's all our democracy.

Another CGS activist argued that he was not interested in getting involved with politics, because it is difficult to promote in political parties those ideas with which the CGS deals.

Political parties had, however, attempted to forge contacts with the CGS, but without success. Valentina Ivanovna gave an example:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: I've had meetings with socially active fellows (*muzhiki*) in Tver′ who say: 'Valentina, organize a women's organization for us.' (…) I say: 'Are there any women among you?' – 'Yes, there are.' – 'So why don't you talk to them so they get organized themselves?' – 'Oh, no. They're not like that.' (…) I mean, that's the kind of mentality: do it for us.

This type of top-down way of creating organizations runs counter to the ideology of the CGS that cherishes self-organization at the grassroots. Under parliamentary elections in 2003, the local branch of United Russia also approached the CGS. The party presented its gender equality programme, but according to Ekaterina Nikolaevna, it became apparent in the discussions that the party members did not endorse the idea of equality. CGS members regarded political parties, in general, as pursuing conservative politics in terms of gender: women should return home to children and family. Ekaterina Nikolaevna also criticized United Russia and the Communist Party for their fixation on the 'equality' (*ravnopravie*) and 'improvement of women's position' (*uluchenie polozheniia zhenshchin*) discourses that cannot address such issues as gendered violence.

Collaboration and consensus

TUHW activists articulate their relationships with the local authorities in the collaboration repertoire, which emphasizes consensus and avoidance of conflicts and confrontation. Ashwin and Clarke (2003, 34–36) have observed that Russian trade unions have tended to actively establish co-operation with the authorities, so much that they can be called a "privileged interlocutor of the state". This collaborative orientation stems from the vulnerability of the unions' position vis-à-vis the state. Their rights and privileges are, to a great extent, regulated and conditioned by the legislative and administrative framework set by the state – and which the state can easily change.

TUHW activists portrayed the municipal and regional authorities as sympathetic partners who understand the plight of the Union and are willing to help and support it.

KATIA: What's the attitude of the city authorities to your trade union?

NINA PETROVNA: It's ok (*normal'no*), we have a good relationship. (…) we have a good, business-like relationship (*delovye otnosheniia*) with both the city Duma deputies and with the administration. And [mayor] Belousov comes to visit us (…) I think we've always had a good relationship, and still do. This kind of business-like relationship, of people who share aspirations. They agree with everything. They won't argue with the fact that buildings are falling apart here, that money is needed. Everything takes money, but it's lacking. So we don't have any collisions, contradictions. [They] listen carefully, put down, promise. They don't always fulfil, though. But there has never been any opposition …

KATIA: Can't it be that they just don't want conflicts?

NINA PETROVNA: Could be, I don't know. On the outside at least, it looks very …

KATIA: So it's generally, (…) not like "what's this trade union for"?

NINA PETROVNA: Oh, no. On the contrary, it's stressed at all levels that it's collaborative work (*sovmestnaia rabota*). Myself for instance, I like it

very much. Both [mayor] Belousov and [governor] Platov always speak about collaborative work. (*Obkom* legal adviser)

The Union and authorities are described as being in the same unfortunate boat that the uncomprehending federal authorities rock: they both struggle with crumbling infrastructure and insufficient resources. Relationships with the municipal and regional authorities are of great importance for the TUHW, because social and health services have increasingly been devolved to be performed and funded at the regional and municipal level. However, the authorities are perceived as not always being able to help and fulfill the promises and demands of the Union, because of insufficient budgetary resources.[5] *Profkom* president Aleksandra Alekseevna stated that the city authorities "listen to the trade union's opinion, but very often explain that they fully agree with our demands, but don't always have the possibility to change things for the better". *Obkom* president Galina Leonidovna commented in a similar vein:

> Authorities don't refuse to meet with trade unions, but they don't always rush to fulfill our demands, however. They meet us, promise things, and support, (…) but when it comes to **fulfilling** all this, they sometimes acknowledge their incapacity, that it's not within their authority (*ot nikh eto ne zavisit*).

The TUHW's consensus orientation manifested itself in the reluctance to name any parties with which the TUHW would not like to collaborate. Galina Leonidovna presented the Union as trying to find a common language with everybody:

SUVI: Can you say with whom you'd never want to co-operate?
GALINA LEONIDOVNA: There aren't any counterparts like that, I guess, because even with an ideological opponent we'd find a common [language] anyway, some points in common (*tochki soprikosnoveniia*). We believe there shouldn't be any adversaries. Otherwise it's going to be very difficult for us. There is opposition to us, there are parties that believe that we, trade unions, are generally sort of like the state … either prepossessed by the state or useless (…). But we try not to respond in the same manner. We just look for points in common. I think we shouldn't have enemies (…). We're constantly trying to find contact with those who could provide any kind of assistance to trade unions.

Galina Leonidovna reacts to, in her opinion, the misplaced claim that the unions are still *de facto* governmental organizations, in the pocket of the state.[6] This doubt about the Union's independence obviously stems from its previous position as a 'transmission belt' and from the close co-operation it continues to cultivate with the authorities.

The TUHW's interaction with the authorities is based on patron–client mechanisms underpinned by *obkom* officers' long-time personal relations with them. The TUHW holds regular meetings with the authorities, writes petitions to the President, governor and mayor, and is engaged in collective tripartite agreements, which are a significant part of the corporatist social partnership framework. Budget sector trade unions have been keener than other trade unions to develop collective agreements, since they are most dependent on concessions from the authorities (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 157). Galina Leonidovna acknowledged, however, that the agreements tend to be of a formal and cosmetic nature, because of the lack of necessary resources to carry out the obligations stipulated in the agreements.[7] Despite the alleged equality of 'social partners', the authorities clearly hold the upper hand, because the TUHW is very restricted in its ability to push the management and the local government to enforce collective agreements.

The conciliatory approach that manifests itself in this collaboration repertoire characterizes the discourse and practices of social partnership in the Russian trade union movement (cf. Chapter 5). The leadership of the central organization of Russian trade unions, FNPR, has said that negotiation and consensus-orientation are the best strategies in dealing with the state in the long run.[8] Ashwin and Clarke (2003) argue that the trade union movement shifted its strategies from contentious to collaborative as a result of the conflicts the movement faced with the state at the beginning of the 1990s.

Unlike the CGS, the TUHW actively collaborates with legislative power, despite the fact that it is defined as a non-political organization. The firm disassociation from politics and the simultaneous striving towards collaboration with legislative power indicates that legislatures, although politically elected, are not perceived as *political* in the same way as political parties. According to Galina Leonidovna, the TUHW makes use of professional affiliation in collaborating with legislatures:

> We're in close contact with them [deputies of city Duma], there're many doctors there, we find support among them. (…) We used to have many doctors in the regional legislature (*Zakonodatel'noe sobranie*) (…). Now only three doctors are left there. This makes our work more difficult.

The TUHW also collaborates closely with the hospital management, as it did in the Soviet Union. In the interviews, the TUHW was narrated a subject position of a mediator (*posrednicheskii organ*) and buffer (*bufer*) between the management and employees. Its role was understood in a similar vein as during the Soviet era, when trade unions were defined as mediators, because of the alleged congruence of the interests of the state and the working class (Ashwin 1999, 20). TUHW activists portrayed primary organizations as trying to avoid conflicts and confrontation with the employers, and *profkomy* and employers as each others' partners. *Profkom*

president Aleksandra Alekseeva, for example, stated that "normally no conflicts arise because we usually try to deal with things together. When there are problems of some kind, the administration normally only helps the trade union in this sense." Another *profkom* president commented that

> we [*profkom*] try to discuss labor disputes with the administration. That is, we are a sort of mediator here. The hospital administration actually not exactly controls, but constantly asks for our help, particularly in organizing some events. Hardly anything would go without us [TUHW] here.

Contestation and opposition

In parallel with the collaboration repertoire, there exists a contentious repertoire in the TUHW. In this repertoire the Union is described as an opponent of and pressure group on the powers-that-be. In this respect it differs from the CGS, whose members did not assign this role to their group. In the contentious repertoire TUHW members voice conflict and controversy, but this is mainly a rhetorical strategy, as in the TUHW's organizational practices collaborative tactics dominate (see Chapter 5; also Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 71). The collaborative and contentious repertoires are not clearly distinct from each other, but they frequently intermingle. For example, Galina Leonidovna described the TUHW to be "both diplomat and extortionist" and continued:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: On the one hand, they [authorities] sort of need an opponent; there's a saying that every smart leader needs an opponent. On the one hand, they should feel where the edge is, when they cross it, and trade unions halt them at this edge because it can lead them too far. And it may be that trade unions somehow pacify (*umirotvoriaiut*), one can say, the situation in the country. Meaning that they let the government know what it's doing wrong. But it doesn't always listen to trade unions because money is always lacking. (…) And they [authorities] think trade unions demand too much.

In this quote the TUHW acquires two subject positions. First, it is represented as an opponent of the state: it controls activities of the authorities and gives feedback about its actions. Second, the TUHW is narrated a position of a 'damper' (cf. Peregudov 1998, 61), a guarantor of social peace in the country. Ashwin and Clarke (2003, 136, 158) argue that the state has been keen to develop social partnership precisely in order to contain potential confrontational action by trade unions and in this way maintain social peace during the period of socio-economic dislocation. The next quote elucidates how partnership and contentious repertoires are interwoven:

SUVI: What is the attitude of local authorities to the trade union?

ALLA SERGEEVNA: You know, judging from my experience, they have under-
standing. (…) But there's one thing I know for sure: concerning any
specific issues one should constantly push (*postoianno dergat'*) the
authorities anyway. Like we turned to the governor once, it was some
three years ago, and he said: "Oh, yes, sure, we understand you, we'll
do everything." We left happy and content. But he didn't do it. (*laugh*)
We went to the city administration once, and again, and once more.
(…) We felt pleased, fine: [but] it's not done again. (…) So you see, the
administration can sometimes pretend that OK, sure, we understand
you, we'll do it. And it does really help sometimes, but certainly not
every time. I mean, a lot depends on ourselves. While you keep pester-
ing (*dergat'*) them there's some effect. Once you quiet down – it's all
over. They're used to being pestered. Everyone comes and asks for one's
'share' (*svoi 'kusok odeiala'*). (*profkom* president)

This quote illustrates well the patron–client constellation that is at work in
the Union's co-operation with the authorities: the Union is portrayed as
competitively appealing to the authorities in order to get its 'share'. Navi-
gation in the patronage framework requires active agency on the part of the
TUHW: it can achieve its goals only if it constantly pressures authorities.
Thus the Union is portrayed as having mutual understanding with the
authorities, but it also has to constantly make sure they deliver what they
promise.

   The TUHW was also assigned a subject position of an opponent in rela-
tion to legislative power. The Union positions itself as a defender and
spokesperson of the victimized people (*narod*) and toilers (*trudiashchiisia*)
by contrasting itself to self-seeking politicians who ignore the interests of
the people. In distinction to the TUHW, politicians were interpreted as not
pursuing the interests of their constituencies and as not being accountable
to them.

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: I went to a city Duma meeting recently, the decision
was about apartment rent. And they [MPs] first argue that the deci-
sion should be made so that it's in our electors' interests, and then
vote for raising the rent! So I took the floor and said: "How can that
be! People have elected you, and you take an anti-people (*antinarodnoe*)
decision." (…) They forget about the electors completely. (…) I think
it's also very wrong when a deputy decides **all on his/her own**; they must
consult with the electors. (…) And one can assume most electors would
vote against raising the rent, but the deputy votes for the rise. I mean
it's totally contradictory. We [trade union] don't do such things. I took
the floor and said: "(…) I've also been elected by our trade union
members. But my decisions are for the good of union members, not
against them."

Management in medical establishments was portrayed mainly as a partner of the TUHW, as was shown in the previous repertoire, but occasionally the activists also presented it as an opponent of the Union. One of the activists positioned the TUHW as controlling the hospital management: "I guess they [management] would probably feel best if nobody disturbed them at all, and they'd be occupied with their problems. [But] one has to interfere (*vmeshivat'sia*) somehow anyway." He, however, hastened to add that there had never occurred any conflicts between the Union and the management, merely 'dissatisfaction'. Some other activists constructed an oppositional stance by stating that the TUHW defends workers from "the ploys of the administration (*proiski administratsii*)".

Interestingly, in my data the organizations established during the Soviet era, such as the TUHW, voiced more openly contentious positions towards the authorities than the organizations founded after the collapse of the Soviet Union. For example, the Veterans' Council actively co-operated with the authorities, but its members also emphasized that the Council criticizes the authorities and makes claims on them in order to defend the rights of the veterans. New organizations, such as the CGS and the Student Human Rights Organization, were also critical towards the authorities, but they tended to see confronting the authorities as a waste of time. In their view, it was better to practice 'tactical collaboration' vis-à-vis the authorities and orient organizational activities to fellow-citizens.

Unraveling and rebuilding co-operation

The political landscape changed notably in Tver' in 2003–4, as both a new mayor and governor and, consequently, new administrative cabinets took office. The diagnosis of the opportunities and constraints for interaction with the authorities changed in the CGS and TUHW. The CGS's strategy of involvement ended up in trouble, as its two key 'involved' allies were replaced. The mayor passed away and the city's Committee of PR and Media was closed down.[9] This illustrates the limits of this strategy: as the involvement was based on individual and not on institutional ties, it proved to be fragile in the face of political changes.

The CGS put out feelers vis-à-vis the new city administration, but it soon realized that the administration was not well disposed towards co-operation with it. According to CGS activists, the new administration perceived the Center as too radical:

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: I recollect last year that the city's Department of Education ordered a school course from her [Valentina Ivanovna]. But when the administration changed and this new head of the Department of Education was appointed, none of those connections were left. To be exact, they asked her [Valentina Ivanovna] to come to the Department, but it appears that her, may I say, radicalism scared people away, they

were not prepared for that. (…) Valentina Ivanovna told them about our projects. The problem is that the head of this (…) department, her sister is an (…) Orthodox artist. So I believe they'll have a different focus.

As the CGS wishes to avoid conflicts and confrontation, it pulled out of its strategy of involvement. Valentina Ivanovna emphasized in her interview the independent position of the group: "Why waste one's health, energy, we're doing well without the authorities." CGS members interpreted that 'the Soviet atmosphere' had returned in Tver′, which was, in part, caused by federal-level developments. As Valentina Ivanovna put it, "The verticals of power have reached Tver′, too, very rapidly. One can feel that. And the revival of the spirit of socialism, in a bad sense of the word." A sign of the 'old times' was also seen in the fact that the security services had gained a stronger foothold in society, and parliamentary and presidential elections were manipulated:

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: I think some stereotypes of the Soviet mentality start to come up, when 99.99 percent of the population voted. One could therefore feel a powerful administrative resource in this [Duma] election campaign. This administration was simply pushing. On the outside, however, it looked quite democratic. But in reality, the campaign was really harsh. It smells like those [old Soviet] times, you know. Especially remembering that the President himself comes from the state security services. That's why the services feel they're in the mainstream and have grown more active.

Parliamentary elections in 2003 changed the political landscape in Tver′. It used to be a stronghold of the Communist Party, but United Russia also won the elections in Tver′. It is evident that United Russia has become the center of a new political, economic and administrative elite, a new *nomenklatura*, peculiarly in a similar vein to the CPSU. A significant part of the elite belong to this party in Russia. Civic activists also clearly recognized this new power constellation. For example, one leader of a disabled people's organization whom I interviewed in 2004 said that she had applied for membership of United Russia, because she hoped that it would open new opportunities for her to extract resources for her organization, as all 'important people' are members of this party. This is an example of the tactical action activists practice in navigating the political landscape.

   CGS members interpreted that the changes in the power structures in Tver′ inflicted damage on independent civic activity. The new mayor disbanded the Social Council and social units, closed the city's Committee of PR and Media and cut funding to the Women's Crisis Center, which was forced to close down its activities.[10] The plight of civic activism was articulated as follows:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: Just wait a little, and we'll turn into a dissident organization.

VADIM PETROVICH: Let's hope not an underground one.

EKATERINA NIKOLAEVNA: As soon as all [foreign] foundations leave here, when the [state] policy becomes clear, civic organizations will probably cease to exist. Or they will go underground, as Communists used to. Or they will talk to each other in the kitchen, like Soviet dissidents.

These are powerful testimonies of the felt curtailment of political citizenship. CGS activists perceived that those seeds of civic activity that had developed during the 1990s were now increasingly being weeded out. However, the negative attitude from the side of the local authorities towards civic groups was not understood to be primarily politically motivated, but rather stemming from the deteriorating economic situation. The attenuation of civic activity was also regarded as stemming from the fact that people are tired from struggling with everyday life:

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: Well, women's organizations are gradually vanishing. But I don't think it has to do so much with local political activities.

VADIM PETROVICH: Right, most probably not because of local politics.

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: It's because of the economic situation. (…) Poverty, which makes people work several shifts in a row.

VADIM PETROVICH: Meaning, there's simply no time for any activism. Fatigue.

SUVI: But the authorities did shut down the Crisis Center?

VALENTINA IVANOVNA: The Crisis Center was shut down. (…) So there are signs of societal life dying out. (…) Pressure.

VADIM PETROVICH: But here again, the authorities seem to have started pushing not because (…) of political convictions. (…) It's just that these things [civic activities] are strange to them in fact. Something one can do without. (…) This can be curtailed straight away – why do we need it? That is, it certainly tells us about the authorities, what is strange to them, on the one hand. On the other hand, they're not political, these decisions. Not because it doesn't suit us politically.

It is important to acknowledge that although the CGS has not publicly protested against the attempts to pressure civic groups, the Center can nevertheless be seen as practicing resistance vis-à-vis them. We can read as resistance Ekaterina Nikolaevna's description of how she sees the role of the CGS today:

It [the work of the Center] is like growing flowers in the frost. It's unpleasant to go out of the greenhouse that is the CGS, and end up in a freezing wind; in our Russian life, which doesn't have mercy on anybody. It is, however, a question of a citizen's stand; that you won't bow. Because usually, the more you bow, the more the pressure grows.

We can also interpret as a form of resistance the fact that the CGS has resumed in its curriculum a course on civil society. According to Valentina Ivanovna, it was a way to protest against the ubiquitous discourse of 'verticals of power' and, correspondingly, the attenuation of discussion on civil society, or its abuse in the hands of the authorities. Furthermore, the CGS tries to continue the work of the Crisis Center in the framework of the CGS by inviting former Crisis Center employees to deliver lectures on violence against women. It has also actively sought resources in order to re-establish the Crisis Center under the auspices of the CGS. We can also read the references to underground and dissident activity, 'kitchen politics', which came up in the interviews, as signs of protest. Invoking these associations in the current context implies that although it would become impossible to practice the CGS's work publicly, the work would not cease, but only shift again to the informal public sphere, as in the Soviet era.

In the case of the TUHW, the shift in local power structures also entailed at least temporal unraveling of its collaborative ties with the authorities. At the same time, the Russian government introduced a new Social Code in 2004, as a result of which partnership with the local and regional authorities emerged as ever more indispensable for the TUHW. This Social Code was received in the TUHW with great anxiety. The aim of the Code was to restructure the social protection system inherited from the Soviet era by substituting a complex system of benefits (*l'goty*) paid to different categories of citizens by a single monetary payment. *Obkom* president Galina Leonidovna interpreted the rationale behind the Code to be for the federal state to push the responsibility for social obligations onto the regions. This would only further curtail citizens' social rights and the material basis of the health care sector (and consequently that of the TUHW) and increase disparities between regions in terms of social protection. Galina Leonidovna complained in her interview that the Social Code had been prepared in secrecy. One TUHW activist had found out about the Code draft by accident on the Internet and reported about it to union activists at a meeting in Moscow. According to Galina Leonidovna, even the new governor was left in the dark as he had claimed to Galina Leonidovna that "I don't know anything [about the Code], I haven't seen it."

The Social Code made locality a focal point for the TUHW. Galina Leonidovna positioned the TUHW as an ally of the local and regional authorities against the federal power and voiced discontent with the TUHW's Central Committee in Moscow. In her view, the Central Committee had distanced itself from regional circumstances and did not understand the harsh reality in which medical workers and unions had to work in the province. Hence the TUHW felt it more easily found a common language with the local and regional authorities than with its own Union. The TUHW and the authorities could potentially find a common enemy in Moscow, as it would be in the interests of both the TUHW and the authorities to seek to

gain as many resources as possible from the federal government to be distributed at the local level.[11]

Although the Social Code pushed the TUHW to further consolidate cooperation with the authorities, there also emerged obstacles to it. Whereas the previous mayor and governor had a background in the Soviet administrative-political apparatus in the same way as the TUHW's *obkom* personnel, the new governor and mayor represented the younger generation and came from the business community. Galina Leonidovna articulated the TUHW's relationships with these new leaders as a combination of exploitation and indifference:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: At least, we met the mayor once, but one should say he doesn't really listen to public opinion (*obshchestvennost'*). When he was a MP we had closer contacts (…), he understood us, he supported us. (…) And now that he's the mayor, he thinks his opinion is the right one. Like how it happened, for instance, with the head of the health care department. He appointed a head who started introducing reforms straight away. We just think it's detrimental to health care. Several doctors wrote a letter to the mayor asking him to dismiss her [the head of the department]. (…) he ignored it all in fact. He met trade unions once, but during the meeting he says correct things, but it all turns out totally different afterwards. So he kind of keeps trying to gain the support of trade unions in his conflict with the regional administration. (…) We haven't ever met with the governor yet, because he said he had nothing to say. He's busy with administrative reorganization.

In order to fight the new Social Code, the *obkom* president considered it important to create a larger coalition, not only with the local and regional authorities, but also with civic organizations, in particular the Communist Party, pensioners and the Komsomol. This selection of partners illustrates well the political and generational orientation of the TUHW. This interest in horizontal networks was, in part, triggered by the temporary weakening of the TUHW's ties with the authorities.

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: We all [civic organizations] have the same demands essentially, everybody in a way strives (…) for a better life for the people. So we should ideally all unite (…). We needn't necessarily unite once and for all, but if we have the same opinion on certain problems we should be advocating it together. It would be more effective if both pensioners and communists and we stood together, and (…) the Komsomol. We could all stand in a united front before the authorities. (…) And now we're all on our own, because trade unions don't belong to any party, we speak for ourselves. (…) I mean, the leaders should unite (…) and work out common demands, then it would be more powerful than when each is on one's own (…). A lot here also depends on the

leaders, ambitions (…), competition. I think it's improper in this situation. Because we do have the same objectives. And (…) those that support us and the people *(narod)*, we could unite. (…) I'm saying there's no common leader people would follow. (…) Attitudes may differ, but nobody would ever deny that Lenin was a leader, and Stalin was a leader, so …

Galina Leonidovna outlines here the reverse side of patronage practices, which favor direct one-to-one asymmetric relationships between the authorities and civic groups: it is difficult to create horizontal ties and co-operate if every group wishes to cultivate unilateral ties with the authorities. By creating a coalition, she suggests, civic organizations could better influence the authorities. However, the creation of this coalition is hampered by mutual controversy and competition between organization leaders. Galina Leonidovna advocates collaboration especially between *leaders*, which construes organizational activities as hierarchically and vertically structured.[12] This creates patron–client relationships not only between the authorities and civic organizations, but also between the organization leaders and rank-and-file members. The high significance assigned to leaders is further accentuated by Galina Leonidovna's statement that the lack of support of leaders is a major factor inhibiting mobilization of the masses. She searches for paragons for contemporary leaders from the Soviet past. She also implies in her quote that the TUHW's insistence on staying out of politics impedes co-operation and influence: the Union cannot easily join forces with Communists, despite congruent interests, because it wants to avoid being associated with politics.

The CGS and the primacy of individual influence

How do civic activists perceive their opportunities for and constraints on influence, and how do they understand this influence? As was discussed in the previous chapter, influence can be divided into three forms: individual, institutional and public sphere influence. In the CGS, individual influence emerged as the most important one, as it is primarily oriented to the *social medium* (Warren 2001), i.e. horizontal networks in the local community.[13] Institutional and public sphere influence was not perceived as important and feasible as the individual one.

   The primacy given to individual influence in the CGS draws on the interpretation that social change can be best achieved at the individual level by transforming people's attitudes through education. The evening school, discussed in Chapter 4, is a good example of the individual influence the CGS seeks to cultivate. The students attending the evening school have reported that the classes have helped them manage better with working life and understand how people are socialized in the contemporary gender system. As Valentina Ivanovna pointed out, "The girl-students have

already learnt to hear this sexism. They told me themselves that 'we wouldn't have noticed these things before'. And now they don't just ignore these instances."

This emphasis on individual influence in the CGS is also caused by the fact that the activists do not define their organization as a watchdog of the state. They do not see it as fruitful to pressure the authorities directly. They assessed the opportunities for civic organizations, including their own, to influence governmental policies and decision-making as meagre. They said that the authorities do not let civic organizations participate in decision-making processes and presented the authorities as indifferent and suspicious towards civic groups:

LARISA ALEKSANDROVNA: Nobody would let them [civic organizations] anywhere, they can't influence yet. They can give advice (…), but the administration will do as they please. (…) Indeed, how can an organization influence? (…) The [state] system (…) always resists the entry of strangers (*chuzhdye elementy*) into it. (…) Nobody listens to them [feminist organizations], they [authorities] simply don't want to listen. The point is that authorities are always afraid that claims would be made on their financial resources, and [they are] afraid of people who have some charisma.

CGS members portrayed the authorities as not listening to the views of or showing interest in civic groups. In their view, the authorities are detached from society, public opinion and citizens; they are not responsive to citizens' claims.[14] This distrust between the authorities and citizens was not, however, understood as something particularly post-Soviet, but rather stemming from Russian history. As Raisa Borisovna put it "We've all been raised to distrust the state. And the state will have to take great pains to break down this distrust." CGS activists felt that the local and regional authorities were reachable to some extent, but the federal powers were elusive. Consequently, they portrayed citizens as being unable to exert political citizenship at the federal level. Boris Antonovich thought that civic organizations' influence is limited, because they are local and have not created larger coalitions. CGS members' assessments about the opportunities to influence also gradually shifted in a more pessimistic direction during 2001–4. In 2001–2, the CGS tried to influence the authorities via the personalized strategy of involvement and participation in the Social Council, but opportunities to influence withered with the closing down of the Council and the unravelling of the strategy of involvement.

Although the prevailing view in the CGS is that it is difficult to influence the authorities, activists nevertheless identified four ways in which this might be possible. First, organizations can try to gain something by exhausting the authorities. Viktoriia Ivanovna described it as follows:

It takes all one's efforts to get any kind of support [from the city administration]. (…) If we need financial resources, it's certainly problematic. (…) If you go to them every day and claim something, then yes. I mean, one must be very patient and have strong nerves.

The second way is through personal connections, and this was seen by far the most influential way.[15] The strategy of involvement practiced in the CGS becomes meaningful in this context. Connections were interpreted as a particularly Russian characteristic of social order.

VADIM PETROVICH: Civil society doesn't work here, only the system of personal contacts (*sistema lichnykh sviazei*) is effective. (…) in fact, I guess, it's a traditional Russian way – through personal contacts. Because nothing works here without personal contacts. So if there's anything, any channel through which civic organizations can make themselves heard, it's personal contacts precisely. I mean, finding acquaintances in power organs.

However, this embeddedness of civic organizations in the system of personal contacts was also regarded as undermining organizations' independence and ability to criticize authorities. Boris Antonovich argued that organizations are "simply dependent. They have contacts at the level of administration. It's through this contact [between] an official, a decision-maker and the leader of a civic organization that an organization is most often controlled."

Third, civic groups were interpreted as being potentially able to exert influence through elections, although this channel was seen as mostly ineffective. The problem with the electoral system was seen as the corrupting effect of power: those entering the 'system' start to behave precisely in the same way as it does. The fourth strategy outlined by the CGS was to exploit the symbolic capital of Western contacts and visitors. According to CGS members, the authorities show interest in foreign guests, which the CGS can use as a resource in its attempts to contact the authorities and influence them (cf. Hemment 2007).

The public sphere influence intermingled with the institutional influence when CGS activists assessed civic organizations' ability to criticize the authorities. Organizations were portrayed as being free to criticize the authorities, but the authorities do not listen to this criticism:

SUVI: Do you think civic organizations can freely criticize the activities of the authorities?
VALENTINA IVANOVNA: They can. One can do anything one pleases now. But they simply won't listen. (…)
SOFIIA VLADIMIROVNA: So it turns into a kind of monologue.
VALENTINA IVANOVNA: The point is that (…) in contrast, perhaps, to your [Finnish/Western] situation, there's no such dependence of the powers-

that-be on the grassroots here. (…) people here have practically no idea about the value of their word. (…) That's why these authorities are **independent**. And one can criticize as much as one wants. They would say – we have freedom of speech.

Similar views were put forward by several other activists in Tver′. Some of them also thought that civic groups' criticism could have negative consequences. A member of the Crisis Center commented that "civic organizations can potentially criticize the authorities, but in reality this criticism may have tragic consequences, because it's very easy to crush (*zadavit′*) a civic organization here". Members of the student human rights organization also expressed the view that the authorities supported them only as long as they did not voice any criticism. In their view, the authorities tried to keep them "on a tight leash" (*na korotkom povodke*).

Despite the plight of civic groups, the majority of CGS activists did not see as realistic the prospect that civic organizations would be banned in Russia. As Viktoriia Ivanovna put it, "they [authorities] don't care whether civic organizations exist or not. There's no sense in banning. Even if we shout at every turn about corruption among the authorities, there'll be no response at all. So banning – what is there to ban?" Boris Antonovich predicted that Russian organizations will gradually transform into obedient state auxiliaries that comply with the needs and interests of the state. In his opinion, citizens' rights were being "slowly but steadily reduced because of the aspiration of those in power to get total control". The West was portrayed as a protector of Russian civic organizations vis-à-vis the state: it was hoped that close interaction with Western countries would mean that the Russian authorities would not dare to ban civic groups or political parties.

The CGS's public sphere influence is limited. The group can potentially exert influence in the public sphere via its publishing activities, but none of the activists mentioned this when they contemplated influence. The CGS does not 'go public' in the sense that it would organize public protests and campaigns in order to destabilize the prevailing gender ideology. Rather, it seeks to transform the gender system by influencing individuals via education. Its orientation is in this sense more inward than outward looking. In this respect, its activities differ from the activities of the US feminist 'counter-publics' that have actively sought to widen public discourses by disseminating feminist discourses over wider public arenas (Fraser 1997, 81–82).

The TUHW and institutional influence

Contra the CGS, which gravitates towards the social medium, the TUHW orients itself strongly towards *the political medium* (Warren 2001), i.e., the state and political system. Influence in the TUHW is thus primarily articulated as *institutional influence*. The public sphere influence appears weak in the TUHW. The *obkom* president complained that trade unions have great

difficulties in gaining access to mass media, and even if the unions are dis-
cussed in the media, it is usually done in a negative light.[16] Individual
influence emerges in the TUHW only indirectly when the activists complain
that the Union's leverage suffers from its inability to mobilize its members.
As in the CGS, the TUHW *obkom* president saw the Union's institutional
influence as having become more limited in 2004.

Lack of efficacy is a pervasive sentiment in TUHW activists' assessments
of institutional influence. As in the CGS, TUHW activists saw that they can
influence the municipal and regional authorities better than the federal
ones, despite the TUHW's all-Russian structure.[17] TUHW members as part
of the *narod* were presented as a disempowered object of the federal power
structures. The activists frequently reiterated the following phrases: "The
government promised us, but didn't deliver. They cheated us" ("*Nam pravi-
tel'stvo obeshchalo, no ne vypolnilo. Nas obmanuli*"), and "The state does not
carry any responsibility for us!" ("*Za nas gosudarstvo nikakoi otvetstvennosti
ne neset!*").

The TUHW strives to influence the authorities first and foremost via
collaborative methods. Interestingly, Union activists did not mention *at all*
demonstrations, picketing and strikes as a potential way to exert influence.
This elucidates the symbolic nature of contentious action in the TUHW.
The TUHW's influence at the local level was also portrayed as being impe-
ded by the fact that a number of issues depend on decision-making at the
federal level. The Union's ability to influence federal-level policies has
become limited as a result of the fragmentation and localization of the trade
union movement. Another factor that was understood as inhibiting the
Union's institutional influence was its weak negotiating position vis-à-vis
the authorities, despite the alleged equality in 'social partnership'. This was
interpreted as diminishing the TUHW's legitimacy and credibility in the
eyes of the workers:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: What I don't really like is that we can't always achieve
    what we want to achieve. (…) When you're fighting a battle that you
    just can't win, and you can't succeed because many things are simply
    beyond your capacities. Let's take the increase of wages. (…) All our
    claims seem to be satisfied and the government makes promises (…)
    [but] the government did not keep these promises. So we got this feeling
    of dissatisfaction because we had been cheated (*nas obmanuli*). (…) And
    the people approach us (…): "Why are you sitting there then, doing
    nothing?" (…) And we don't have enough power to do it. This is very
    disturbing.

Profkom presidents assigned to the *obkom* office the primary role of exert-
ing institutional influence. They tended to portray influence as something
that *obkom* officers do 'out there'. They did not often seem to be aware of
what the *obkom* had achieved or to be able to give examples of how the

TUHW had been able to exert influence. This testifies to the problems of communication between the *obkom* and primary organizations:

KATIA: Do you think trade unions can have an influence in Tver′?

ANDREI PAVLOVICH: Certainly. (…) Because they [*obkom* officers] at least have meetings (…) with the governor, and the regional administration. There is some influence, at least. Maybe it's not so, you know, powerful and long-term, but (…) authorities listen anyway.

KATIA: Can you remember any example regarding your trade union?

ANDREI PAVLOVICH: Well, there're no really clear, specific examples … We just say what our leaders have told us, at the union's *obkom* level. (…) I mean, it's routine, it's their (*obkom's*) job.

TUHW activists, like several other activists in Tver′, portrayed the authorities' lack of accountability as centrally inhibiting civic organizations' opportunities to influence policies:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: When one looks at our state Duma now, the impression is even that (…) the people have elected them and they've forgotten that people have elected them. They pursue their own interests there. They pass some laws which are against the people's interests (*vo vred narodu idut*), it's not people, not their electors they vote for, but they simply follow their own convictions (…). And we have no system through which we could demand that they report to us, through which we could recall them (…). We elect them for a certain term, and they sit there until the term is over. And they all manage to get rich within this term.

Instead of suggesting that people and the unions exert pressure on legislative power, Galina Leonidovna searched for a solution to the problem in the increasing the power of the President. In her view, the President should appoint governors and have the power to dismiss them. Hence, instead of developing democratic mechanisms of governance, Galina Leonidovna proposed the abolition of the elections of governors, a measure that the Putin government, in fact, carried out. The President was thus represented as an ally of the people vis-à-vis dishonest politicians.

TUHW activists also contemplated the scope of influence of *profkomy* vis-à-vis the hospital management. The changes in the legislative framework, in particular in the Labor Code, were seen as having redefined the relationship between the employer and unions in a way that undermined the unions' position. *Profkom* presidents are, as a rule, dependent on the employers, as they hold the presidency as volunteers, which, according to the *obkom* president, makes them reluctant to enter into confrontation with the employer. As a result, the *profkom* presidency may turn into a way to advance one's career, which disrupts the altruistic ethic in the trade union and undermines the Union's position as an opponent vis-à-vis the management:

GALINA LEONIDOVNA: He [*profkom* president] can't confront the employer because he's subordinated to the employer (…). We can protect them [*profkom* presidents] only if they are fired. And before the employer could not even reprimand [workers] without informing us, so there used to be at least some protection. Nowadays it has been drastically reduced. That's why we don't even know how to motivate people to join [the trade union]; we are persuading people to become [*profkom*] leaders. The only thing is that there are still a few people who like to show off, who would like to do the job for their career, for getting a promotion. But then they are not very keen to confront the employers.

The new Labor Code that came into force in 2002 gives employers more power over employees than before, which TUHW activists felt as undermining their authority in the hospital. This change was significant in the micropolitics of the hospital. *Profkom* president Anna Nikolaevna recalled:

Before I used to have a full legal right to go and inquire about one's salary, extra bonuses, etc. However, you have to fight for it now while it used to be much easier. Before it was, like, I was going along the corridor and they welcomed me, were scared of me.

She was afraid that the Labor Code would entail the withering of the Union at the hospital level. She sighed: "Our country has changed 180 degrees." TUHW activists also thought that *profkomy* should have more authority vis-à-vis the management than they currently have. The mechanisms through which the unions can try to influence the hospital management were considered far too bureaucratic and time-consuming.

Svetlana Denisovna was the only TUHW activist who presented a positive assessment of the TUHW's efficacy. Unlike others, she saw trade unions' relevance as having increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union. She portrayed the Union as the last support and defender of the toilers. The heightened relevance of union activities was understood to stem from the changes in the Union's position and tasks.

SVETLANA DENISOVNA: Well, trade unions are necessary. They've always been. And now (…) perhaps even more so, because it's the only prop remaining for toilers to rely upon (…). There's someone to say a weighty word in defence of our employees (…). And who else would stand up indeed? The State Duma takes some decisions directed against toilers (…). The City Duma sometimes doesn't particularly strive for our interests. Trade unions are the only ones, I believe. [In the Soviet era we had] socialist competition, (…) some entertaining events, organization of recreation. And now we deal with salaries, defending interests. That is, our functions have changed somewhat. I guess we started

raising problems like salary delays in a sharper way. (…) And because serious questions are posed before the government, the government has to take trade unions' opinions into account. (…) the situation itself is now such that trade unions play a significant part.

TUHW activists regarded the diminishing membership rate and passivity of the members as significantly hampering the Union's ability to influence the authorities. Here the individual and institutional influences were inter-woven: if the TUHW could instill belief in its efficacy in the members, it could mobilize them and have more impact vis-à-vis the authorities. It is telling that even the most active people, the *obkom* staff and *profkom* presidents, felt the Union had very few opportunities to exert influence. This obviously makes it difficult to engender a sense of efficacy in rank-and-file members. Although TUHW activists recognized that mass participation would be a way to increase the TUHW's authority, the Union has not been able to encourage this mobilization in its organizational practices. None of the interviewed activists suggested that the all-inclusive membership would undermine the TUHW's capacity to mobilize workers, nor did they propose to deconstruct the Union according to professional lines, or to exclude employers and state officials from the Union. One *profkom* president thought that the Union had not been able to fashion itself anew, but rather continued to draw on old cadres and strategies, which undermined the TUHW's influence. She commented as follows:

The trade union itself has to be changed so that it should not just be active, (…) [but] the activity should be effective. As far as I see, many cadres of our trade union have been working there since Soviet times. They are accustomed to those forms and methods of work [and] got used to looking at the leader with great obedience and willingly listening to him no matter what he's saying. New, active people are needed.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that co-operation between the authorities and civic organizations is based upon hierarchically structured patron–client arrangements, in which co-operation depends to a great extent on the patron, the authorities. Interaction is interpersonal rather than inter-institutional, which stems from the weak institutionalization of co-operation practices and a lack of established rules of the game. This undermines the development of democratic governance.

Like the officials in the previous chapter, CGS and TUHW activists construe the local community as the primary framework of citizenship. In the CGS, a *tactical model of citizenship* is constructed. The CGS practices tactical collaboration vis-à-vis the authorities in which the strategy of involvement is a central tool. The Center strives to involve the authorities in its

projects and commit them in this way to promoting ideas important to the CGS. However, the authorities are portrayed as viewing the Center for the most part with indifference or wishing to make use of it for their own purposes. The activists do not define the Center as a pressure group on the authorities and the Center does not engage in contentious action. With the strategy of involvement the CGS tactically strives to make use of the patron–client arrangements for its own purposes and to destabilize power relations in these arrangements.

CGS activists also outline partnership relations between the state and civic organizations. Echoing the officials' complementation repertoire in the previous chapter, they regard the state as the primary agent in social welfare delivery, but also advocate co-operation between organizations and the state. They also emphasize individual responsibility and self-help and the need to dismantle Soviet state paternalism. By contrast, TUHW activists think that the state should provide social services to citizens as it did in the Soviet Union and they do not envision a role for civic organizations in service delivery.

The TUHW actively seeks co-operation with the authorities, but it also simultaneously positions itself as an opponent of the state. However, this oppositional stance manifests itself mainly at the rhetorical level, as collaborative tactics clearly dominate in the TUHW. The citizenship model constructed in the TUHW can be called *paternalist citizenship*. TUHW activists exercise citizenship within the parameters of the hierarchically structured patronage framework. Navigation in this framework requires relentless activism from the Union. Whereas in the CGS patronage is sought to destabilize and is used tactically, in the TUHW patronage is not knowingly challenged.

The changes in the political landscape in Tver′ in 2003–4 changed the patterns of interaction between the authorities and civic organizations. The CGS's strategy of involvement dissolved, which illustrates the limits of the patron–client mechanisms: as the strategy of involvement was based on interpersonal instead of interorganizational ties, it proved vulnerable to political fluctuations. The TUHW's ties with the local authorities also partially unraveled, but unlike the CGS, it actively strove to rebuild these ties and ally with the municipal and regional authorities against the federal government. The TUHW's leadership also showed more interest than before in increasing co-operation with other civic organizations, in order to better influence the authorities.

The TUHW and the CGS conceive their forms of influence in different ways. In the CGS, as well as in the majority of interviewed organizations in Tver′, individual influence is considered primary. This manifests itself in the CGS's goals and activities: it aims at social change by transforming people's worldviews via education. This emphasis on individual influence is also caused by the fact that the group members perceive it futile to try to pressure the authorities. By contrast, in the TUHW institutional influence is primary, although the Union members assess it as rather limited, in particular at the federal level.

8   Conclusion

This book has analyzed civic activity and citizenship and their gendered manifestations in contemporary Russia on the basis of a case study of Tver′. It has addressed four main research questions. *The first question* has dealt with pinpointing the central logics of action and characteristics of Russian civic organizations. *Contra* the common impression, this study has shown that a multifaceted organizational terrain exists in the Russian provinces, which mainly functions without foreign donor support. This study has also shown that social class centrally structures the field of civic activity in Russia. Civic organizations function as an arena of capital accumulation and conversion, and contribute to the remaking of the Russian class structure. The recurrent theme in the research data is how the monetarization of everyday life (Rotkirch 2000) and a lack of necessary economic capital impede participation in civic organizations. The interviewed activists in this study see an economically secured position as a prerequisite for participation, which construes civic activity as a privilege and gives a flavor of elitism to it.

Cultural capital also centrally facilitates participation in civic activity, which is manifested in the fact that civic organizations tend to be dominated by the educated class. Organizations can be seen as a vehicle of the educated class to advocate their interests, help themselves, and seek both social and individual-level change. The centrality of cultural capital in civic organizations also manifests itself in the popularity of the educational and enlightenment activities in Russian civic groups. The pivotal role of cultural capital in organizations is linked with the professionalization of civic activity. Scholars and representatives of Western donor agencies, as well as a number of interviewees in this study, frequently portray Russian organizations as weak and lacking in professionalism, skills and competence. This negation is revealing as to how civic activity is understood: organizational activity is defined as the work of professionals who devote a substantial amount of time to it. It is a job opportunity and a career demanding special skills. This is in contrast, for example, to the traditional Scandinavian ethos of civic activity characterized by amateurishness: civic activity is something that people do as volunteers outside working life and it is not supposed to

require special professional skills (Eikås and Selle 2003). Professionalization may entail that those lacking the necessary cultural capital become marginalized from civic participation, which impedes their ability to exercise political citizenship. Thus civic organizations, along with offering potentially empowering arenas for interest and identity articulation and politicization, can also function as an excluding force, as a vehicle of the (re)production of social inequalities and disadvantage in society.

This book also argues that new civic organizations, founded during the post-Soviet era, are often an institutionalized form of informal social networks. Social networks, which were a central element of everyday interaction in Soviet society, structure the field of contemporary civic activism. *Contra* mass Soviet societal organizations, civic groups founded after the Soviet era tend to be small and they primarily recruit members from personal and work-related networks. By demonstrating that civic organizations are often based upon social networks, this study questions the argument proposed, among others, by Howard (2003) that informal networks have a negative effect on participation in civic activity. However, this close intertwinement of social networks and civic organizations implies that the logic of civic organization in Russia differs from Western models of organization, characteristic of which is, according to Alapuro (forthcoming) that organizations actively seek new members, and participation does not depend on personal contacts. Networks as a form of social capital are a resource – and often the only resource available – that can be made use of in organizational activities. Founding an organization can be conceived as a form of self-help: organization status facilitates conversion of social capital into economic capital by giving potential access to governmental and foreign funding. Civic organizations can also help people to maintain and accumulate cultural capital, for example, by offering access to training programs, which later potentially can be converted into economic capital in the labor market. Thus, 'civic organization' as an acknowledged institutional form of activity that became available in the 1990s is a way to gather and make use of capital in the pursuit of improving one's life circumstances. The translation of informal networks into formal positions also characterizes official Russian political life (Renz 2006), which suggests that the intertwinement of informal and formal networks is a central feature of Russian political culture.

Another central feature of Russian civic organizations is that they operate primarily at the local level and tend to gravitate towards executive power. Civic organizations are keener to cultivate vertical ties with the authorities than horizontal ties with other civic organizations or media. This gravitation towards the authorities has presumably increased as a result of the decline in foreign funding in the 2000s, making organizations more dependent on the authorities. There is a danger that organizations may lose their independent status and turn increasingly into state auxiliaries, carrying out state-mandated policies in exchange for governmental funding. This means

that the civic sphere is co-opted by the state, and individual and political autonomy as key dimensions of democratic rule are undermined.

The second research question this book has addressed concerns the gendered dimensions of citizenship and socio-political activity in Russia. Gender has centrally articulated civic activity and institutional politics at the symbolic level and at the level of social practices. Civic activity is often discursively associated with femininity and institutional politics with masculinity. Furthermore, women, especially educated ones, participate more than men in civic organizations in Tver′. The civic sphere is also divided along gender lines that often follow the gender divisions in the labor market: women dominate the traditionally femininely-marked territories of social welfare, health care, education and culture, whereas men dominate political parties and military-patriotic groups. In addition to political parties, the formal political institutions are firmly in the hands of men. Women's more active participation in civic organizations suggests that organizations have opened up as a channel of socio-political mobilization not only for the educated class, but very importantly for women. The fact that civic organizations and political parties tend to interact little with each other in Russia indicates a distance between and divergence of women's and men's spheres of activity. This distinction between 'feminine civic activity' and 'masculine politics' is marked by notable differences in resources and opportunities to participate in decision-making, and consequently poses a major challenge to the functioning of Russian democracy. This gendered distinction has, on the one hand, offered women a space in which they can experience relative independence and empowerment and gain the opportunity to create alternative practices. On the other hand, it has also entailed that women remain without formal political power. The civic sphere remains as a specifically women's realm, which the political realm of men regulates and controls, for example, through legislative means.

How can we account for this division between 'feminine civic activity' and 'masculine politics'? The gender system assigns norms for gender relations, which define and legitimize different types of participation strategies for men and women and influence the types of capital women and men can collect and how they can employ them. Blatant sexism in Russian political discourses discourages women's participation in politics, and politics in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia has traditionally been dominated by men. By contrast, the interviewees in this study define civic activity as a sphere of care, as an extension of the private domain where 'feminine qualities' can be legitimately made use of. Traditional perceptions of femininity offer women symbolic recognition more in civic activism than in the formal political sphere. Gender differentiation of work, social networks and leisure in Russia (Tartakovskaya and Ashwin 2006, 173) also produce gendered agency in the socio-political sphere. Civic organizations primarily seek new members via informal networks, and politicians also rely upon personal

informal networks in building their institutional base (Renz 2006), which presumably means that recruitment tends to happen from same-sex spheres.

The interviewees in this study interpret gender relations and identities mainly by drawing on an essentialist understanding of sexual difference, i.e., the idea of 'natural' sexual difference as grounding and justifying social norms (Moi 1999, 20). I have proposed that women activists' reliance on essentialist logic can be understood as 'tactical essentialism': they tactically use essentialism in carving out niches of agency and legitimizing their socio-political activism. Essentialist notions appear feasible, because they are familiar from the Soviet gender ideology and they are also effectively circulated in contemporary public discourses. Some of the male interviewees in this study also rely upon essentialist logic to explain gender differences in socio-political participation, but they, as a rule, employ it in order to legitimize the existing gender division of labor. This illustrates how reliance on essentialist logic can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can destabilize gendered power structures by opening access to women to the socio-political arena, but, on the one hand, it can also solidify and legitimize the existing gender division of labor, exaggerate differences between women and men, and thus reinforce the gender hierarchy it seeks to disrupt. The strength of essentialism in my research data also explains why gender is seldom discussed in the accounts of the trade union work and relationships between the state and civic organizations. Because gender relations are perceived as 'natural' and 'self-evident', they do not need to be explicitly articulated; indeed, their supposed naturalness eliminates the need for discussion.

These gender divisions in socio-political participation in Russia construct a gendered conception of citizenship and a national political gender order in which women and men are assigned different positions and duties. Women are to provide care both in public and in private domains (in homes, female-dominated care professions, and in civic organizations), while men, in contrast, are to engage in institutional politics and paid work, and to follow the model of the male breadwinner. This shows how the social transformation of the 1990s has not meant a removal but a reconfiguration of asymmetries of gendered power (cf. Watson 1993).

The third research question in this book has dealt with the formation of collective identity in two case organizations, the Center for Women's History and Gender Studies (CGS) and the Trade Union of Health Care Workers (TUHW). I have examined how members of these groups describe their organizations and what kinds of meanings they give to their activities. Both the CGS and the TUHW are workplace-based organizations; this highlights the fact that workplaces can offer civic organizations an existing terrain of resources that can be harnessed for civic activities (cf. Alapuro and Lonkila 2000). The CGS has a multidimensional collective identity, which allows members to connect themselves to the group in different ways. The multiple affective ties that unite the participants – marital, friendship and collegial ties – reinforce belonging and commitment to the group, but at

the same time, they also potentially make the group vulnerable, because conflicts can be difficult to handle in the group based upon such emotional investments. A central tension in the CGS is formed between discursive and organizational practices. The members portray the Center as a team that is built upon respect for the individual, but at the level of organizational practices, the group is heavily centered around its leader and dependent on her. One CGS activist aptly summarized this as follows: "The Center is like a chain. If you take away one link, the leader of the Center, the whole chain falls apart". This metaphor reveals the weakness of the CGS: as the common saying goes, 'a chain is as strong as its weakest link'. In the CGS, all other links are considerably weaker than the leader.

In the TUHW a weakly defined collective identity centrally inhibits workers' mobilization. The all-inclusive membership in the Union – its membership includes employers, employees and officials administering health care – impedes the formation of collective identity on the basis of common professional interests, or workers' interests vis-à-vis the management. The TUHW cannot accommodate the different and partly conflicting interests of its heterogeneous membership in a meaningful way, which leads to ineffective interest protection, and frustration and disappointment among its members. The TUHW has not been able to translate the workers' feeling of subordination and suffering into a politicized sense of oppression in the same way as, for example, the Soldiers' Mothers movement has. This being the case, the Union grounds its identity on a mythical collectivity of victimized, disempowered people (*narod*) constructed vis-à-vis the exploiting powers-that-be (*vlast'*). *Vlast'* as a rule refers to the federal organs of power, while the employers and city and regional authorities are often represented as the TUHW's allies. This effectively dampens conflicts between the authorities, employers and the Union at the local level.

These two organizations can also shed light on the potential strategies of capital conversion and the formation of a class position among university teachers and medical workers. The CGS has offered university teachers a new way to acquire a livelihood and pursue academic work in post-socialist circumstances. The CGS's dual status as a civic organization and a university structure is an institutional form that has allowed it flexibly to draw on both foreign and governmental funding and to translate its members' cultural capital into economic capital. TUHW members, by contrast, have not been as successful as the CGS in capital conversion. The TUHW lost in the transition its position as an important arena of accumulation and exchange of political capital, and it has not been able to make good this loss. Hospitals and trade unions have not been as conducive environments as new civic organizations and universities in terms of access to economic capital, since foreign donors and governmental structures do not allocate grants to trade unions. The organizational logic of the CGS can be called *creative*: it has been able to appropriate and tactically make use of the opportunities opened up by the social transformation. The organizational

logic of the TUHW, by contrast, can be characterized as *defensive*: the group seeks to adapt to the changed environment as best as it can and adhere to its traditional strategies.

The analysis of the activities of civic organizations in Tver′ highlights an important function of contemporary Russian civic organizations: they are *loci of communality and sociability*. Civic organizations partly replace the terrain of Soviet collectives that have been disintegrating as a result of the social transformation and provide sites of belonging in a time of socio-economic dislocation. In the West, the link between communality and civic participation has been animatedly discussed, in particular in the context of the social capital debate and communitarian ethic (e.g. Putnam 1995; Etzioni 1998). The communality of Russian civic organizations, however, differs from the communality envisioned in the communitarian and social capital debate in the West. It is 'selective communality', as it is restricted to the members of the organizations and does not create the generalized reci-procity and trust envisaged in the social capital debate. The organization members may invest a considerable amount of trust in and be emotionally committed to the organization, but this trust and commitment does not readily extend beyond the group. Current civic activities tend to build upon and reproduce the traditional Russian organizational form of *kruzhki*.

Communality and informal sociability also emerge as central elements in the activities of the CGS and the TUHW. CGS activists envision a new type of communality in which the individual comes before the collective, and in this sense they challenge the Soviet form of collectivism built upon the principle of the subordination of the individual to the collective. TUHW activists, by contrast, seek to preserve Soviet collectivistic practices. They understand the Union and workplaces as collectives, which have common interests that everyone is supposed to serve. This centrality of collectivism in the TUHW can be seen both as a continuation of Soviet trade unionism and as a reaction to the individualization process in post-Soviet Russia. I suggest that by cultivating communality, both organizations seek to engen-der emotional capital, which is an essential dimension of collective identity and action.

The fourth research question in this book has concerned the relationships between the authorities and civic organizations and civic organizations' influence in Russia. The interviewed officials define the role of organizations from the viewpoint of the needs of the state, and thus the model of citizen-ship they construct can be called state-determined citizenship. Civic orga-nizations are understood to help the state by mediating between the state and citizens and by helping the authorities in service delivery. Civic organi-zations and citizens are encouraged to participate in governance more than in the Soviet Union, but only within the parameters set by the authorities. Officials construct the local community as a unitary entity, where the inter-ests and needs of citizens should be congruent and harmonious with those of the state, and they position themselves as the ones who decide the 'real'

needs of the community. Thus, their starting point is the Soviet principle of the primacy of the interests of the collective vis-à-vis those of the individual. None of the interviewed officials defined civic organizations as a counterweight to the state; hence, organizations are not perceived as a political arena.

The officials and civic activists produce contradictory conceptions of activism and the role of civic organizations. The officials view civic groups as implementing state-determined policies, while the activists define the *raison d'être* of organizational activity to be advocacy of their interests and rights, tackling social problems, pursuit of wider social change and self-help. Co-operation between the authorities and civic organizations in Russia is based upon personified patron–client arrangements, which inhibit the development of generalized rules of play and institutionalized interaction practices. This entails that personal loyalties and informal influence play a considerable role, which makes the co-operation between civic groups and officials fragile.

The activists and officials construct different models of citizenship, but these models have one feature in common: they all position the city and region as the primary site of citizenship. In the CGS, an active and tactical model of citizenship is constructed. The CGS practices tactical collaboration vis-à-vis the authorities in which the 'strategy of involvement', i.e. involving the authorities in the activities of the Center, is a central tool. With the strategy of involvement the CGS tactically makes use of the patron–client relationships for its own purposes and tries to destabilize power relations inherent in them. The citizenship model constructed in the TUHW can be called paternalist citizenship: TUHW activists exercise citizenship within the parameters of the patron–client system. Whereas the CGS seeks to destabilize patronage and use it tactically, in the TUHW patronage is not knowingly challenged.

In analyzing civic organizations' influence in Russia, we can discern three main forms: individual, institutional and public sphere influence. Russian civic organizations have, in general, been most successful in exerting individual influence. Most organizations in Tver′, including the CGS, conceived of their influence primarily as individual influence. Civic organizations have offered people social support and services, improved the conditions of living in local communities and developed various skills through their educational activities. By contrast, civic organizations' institutional and public sphere influences have been weaker, in particular at the federal level. Public sphere influence has been restricted, among other things, by the state dominance of the media landscape. Only a few organizations can effectively influence public opinion and visibly participate in public debate. Influence on decision-making and state policies has also been limited, which, in part, stems from the fact that Russian civic organizations tend to be local and have little horizontal inter-regional co-operation. The TUHW, for example outlined institutional influence as a primary strength of their organization, but

the TUHW's ability to influence the authorities was assessed as weak. Similarly the interviewed officials in Tver′ did not see civic organizations as exercising notable institutional influence. Organizations' ability to influence political decision-making is also weakened by the fact that there is little collaboration and a deep distrust between civic organizations and political parties. Civic organizations also collaborate considerably less with legislative than with executive power. This is problematic, because it impedes citizens' opportunities to channel claims and aspirations into the political decision-making process. Activists in Tver′ characterized politics as being self-seeking action and about struggling for power and personal gain, while they saw civic organizations as altruistically pursuing the 'common good' and being oriented towards society and the people.

The main part of the research for this book was conducted in 2001–2. The operational preconditions of Russian civic organizations have changed after that. Political development has been riddled with contradictions. On the one hand, during the Putin era, the state and civic organizations have begun to forge co-operation, but on the other hand, at the same time the state has vigorously strengthened its control over civic organizations and other spheres of life. A clear manifestation of the increased state control is the amendments made to the legislation regulating civic associations in 2006. This clearly demonstrates the central role of the state for the preconditions and development of civic activity in today's Russia. Another contradiction is that in parallel with increased state control, the Russian political elite actively circulates concepts of civil society and democracy in public discourse. The elite has reworked the conception of democracy to better 'fit' Russia and such concepts as 'sovereign', 'managed' and 'Eastern' democracy have been introduced. All these concepts position the state as the main source of social and political development. Civic organizations are expected to loyally implement policies set by the state and act as a helper of the authorities. Thus, organizations based on citizens' self-organization are not viewed as a critical counterforce to the state. They are not understood as a political, but rather as an executive arena.

The Russian civic field has become increasingly polarized between 'allies' and 'adversaries' of the state (cf. Evans 2006). Loyal and 'non-political' organizations that do not question state authority and produce services that the state cannot or does not want to produce and in this way contribute to maintaining social peace are viewed favorably by the state and incorporated into the state-led structure of 'selective corporatism' (cf. Zdravomyslova 2005). By contrast, contentious, critical and politically oriented groups, such as human rights and environmental organizations and ethnic minority groups, are frequently regarded as adversaries of the state and are marginalized, harassed and excluded from the partnership.

This book raises several implications for further research pertaining to civic activity, citizenship and gender. First, it has advocated the importance of local-level case studies for understanding Russia's development, because

of the considerable differences among Russian regions. More ethnographically informed case studies about civic activities at the local level are needed. A pool of case studies would enable us elaborate a fuller theoretical model of the dynamics of civic activity, and to theorize how the distance from the Kremlin, attitudes of the regional and municipal authorities and business, standard of living, among other things, affect the patterns of civic organization. Second, more research is also needed concerning the effects of the 'politics of verticals of power' for civic organization. How are federal political lines lived and realized at the local level and how do they shape the interaction practices between civic groups and the authorities?

Third, I have argued in this study that in order to understand the functioning of the Russian political system and conditions of democracy, analysis of gender is essential. The gendered aspects of socio-political activity certainly merit further inquiry. This study has demonstrated that women in Tver′ participate more actively in civic organizations than men, but in order to learn whether this is a more general pattern in Russia, more statistical inquiry is needed. Furthermore, an intriguing question is how gender is linked to the current transformation of the civic and political spheres in Russia. How do gender relations manifest themselves in civic organizations that are closely connected with the political and economic elite? There is also a need to study closely male-dominated civic groups and their discourses, practices and strategies of creating emotional commitment in the group. Finally, this study has discussed the link between informal networks and formal organizations – how informal ties translate into a formal structure – and this is also a theme that requires further inquiry, in particular in terms of gender.

Despite the plight of civic organizations in today's Russia, civic activities will hardly wither. The collective memory and tradition of civic activism in Russia have taught the activists how 'to grow flowers in the frost' and survive through 'political winters'. I suggest that part of the critically oriented activities will shift again to informal public spheres – to kitchens and friendship circles – as in Soviet times, either because organizations are refused registration and officially closed down, or simply in order to avoid state control and harassment. More than a decade of independent civic activism has also engendered a host of new informal publics and networks, including virtual communities on the Internet, which may help these organizations to survive. These new and old informal publics may offer civic activities 'capsules' in which to winter and wait for more extensive political opportunities.

Notes

1 Introduction

1 The few exceptions include, for example, Hemment (2007) and Zdravomyslova (2004).
2 See, for example, Yanitsky (2000), Henry (2002) and Urban *et al.* (1997).
3 See, among others, Sperling (1999), Kay (2000), and Hemment (2007).
4 Caiazza's (2002) study is a rare exception in this respect.
5 I have chosen to translate *obshchestvennaia organizatsiia* as 'civic organization', although it literally means 'societal' or 'public' organization. In distinction to contemporary civic organizations, I refer to Soviet organizations by the term 'societal organization'.
6 In the conventional threefold division of power the third one is judicial power. However, this study does not examine civic organizations' interaction with judicial power, although many organizations, such as human rights groups, frequently interact with it and are involved, for example, in court cases.
7 According to the Russian legislation, municipal powers are 'organs of local self-government' and are not formally part of state power. However, municipal powers here are dealt with in connection with the state apparatus, as in many ways they are dependent on and intertwined with the regional and federal power structures.
8 During the Cold War as well as today, civil society discussion has been marked by heavy political baggage and normatively loaded positions. In state socialism, civil society was officially defined as a bourgeois institution unsuitable for people's democracy. For Eastern European intellectuals the Gramscian counter-hegemonic version of civil society was a crucial conceptual tool in their struggle against Communist rule.
9 For other ways of categorizing civil society models, see, e.g., Seligman (1992) and Alexander (1998).
10 For illuminating discussions of civil society discourses in Russia, see Belokurova (2002) and Levin (1998).
11 The L-stream (following Locke) refers to the Anglo-American liberal tradition, which conceptualizes civil society as a pre-political ethical community with a minimal role for the state. The M-stream (following Montesquieu) represents a Tocquevillean vision of civil society as a set of associations that mediate relations between the state and the individual.
12 As far as I know, the discourse-analytical approach has not been applied before to the study of civic organizations in Russia.
13 See also Burawoy, Krotov and Lytkina (2000).
14 See examples in Ashwin (1999) and Rivkin-Fish (2005).

15 Bourdieu's theory has been criticized for its economistic undertone, 'capitalization' of human life. However, Skeggs (1997, 9) suggests that capital is best conceived of as a metaphor that is a helpful analytical tool in understanding how access, resources and legitimation contribute to class formation.

16 My analysis is indebted, in particular, to Beverley Skegg's (1997) insightful, path-breaking account on gender and social class in the UK. Toril Moi also has elaborated Bourdieu's theory of capital in her seminal essay "*Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture*" (originally published in 1991, reprinted in Moi 1999).

17 It is worth noting that Bourdieu's conception of social capital differs significantly from Robert Putnam's. Putnamian social capital refers to dense associational networks that generate norms of reciprocity and trust and consequently enhance governance and economic performance. Bourdieu's conception, by contrast, is not limited to formal associations and does not have the social psychological dimension present in the Putnamian version (see Siisiäinen 2002; Edwards and Foley 1998).

18 Connell's (1987, 98–99) 'gender order', i.e. "a historically constructed pattern of power relations between women and men and definitions of femininity and masculinity", is an analogous approach to the gender system approach.

19 Hall (1999, 21–23) and Melucci (1995) provide illuminating reviews of different conceptualizations of identity. An interesting critical remark about the concept of identity can be found in Handler (1994).

20 During the Soviet period Tver′ was known as Kalinin. In 1990, both the city and the region adopted the old name of Tver′.

21 The information in this section, unless otherwise mentioned, is gathered from the following sources: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie oblasti Tveri v 2001 godu; Informatsionno-analiticheskii biulleten',* and *Tverskoi oblastnoi komitet gosudarstvennoi statistiki 2002.*

22 In Tver′ the figure was 17,707 RUR (€495), whilst the average for the Russian Federation was 28,707 RUR (€802).

23 The interviews were conducted in Russian by myself and my research assistants and they were transcribed by a team led by Evgeniia Poretskina from the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. Fifty-eight activists, four representatives of international donor agencies, and eight officials of local and regional administrations were interviewed. The key stakeholders, such as the leaders of the CGS and the TUHW, were interviewed more than once. Interviews were conducted, in addition to the CGS and the TUHW, in the following civic organizations: Legal Aid Clinic, Veterans' Club, Student Human Rights Organization, two sport organizations, Resource Center of Civic Organizations, Disabled People's Organization, Veterans' Council, three women's organizations, Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the United Russia political party.

24 In chapters 4 and 5, I also draw on frame analysis, which offers a useful tool for the analysis of collective identity formation. Frame analysis comes very close to discourse analysis, as they share the same ontological and epistemological starting points.

25 In locating intertextual knots in the data I have received help from Evgeniia Poretskina and her team in the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and from Anna Borodina. I thank them for being such helpful guides to the Russian world of meanings.

26 Unregistered civic organizations fell outside the scope of the survey, but I expect this number to be rather meagre. Organizations have tended to register in Russia, because only registered organizations can receive grants from donors; registration also facilitates co-operation with the authorities.

27 According to this register, there are 628 registered civic organizations in the city. The sample, 174 organizations, was drawn from the 611 organizations that had some contact information in the register.

28 The survey was conducted together with a research team from Tver′ State University. The team included Dmitrii Borodin (co-director of the project), Anna Borodina, Oleg Belousov, Anastasiia Milaia, Igor′ Emel'ianov, and Aleksandra Zimina. I thank the team members for their invaluable contribution to this study. I also thank Ulla Hakanen and Inna Kopoteva for translating the survey questionnaire into Russian and Dmitrii Borodin for suggesting useful amendments to it.

29 The categories were as follows: social welfare and health care; culture and education; sport and leisure; professional issues; youth and children; advocacy; political activity; veterans and pensioners; and 'other', which includes those organizations that could not be classified on the basis of their names in any of the above-mentioned categories. We had to supplement the sample several times, because we were not able to find many of those organizations included in the original sample, and because twelve organization leaders refused to participate in the survey. The sample was supplemented by taking a new random sample from the same category from which the original organization came.

30 Here I entered the field of *blat*, i.e., the use of personal networks and informal contacts (*znakomstvo i sviazi*) in obtaining information, goods and services and finding a way around formal procedures (Ledeneva 1998).

31 As Marja Rytkönen (2004, 26) has pointed out,

> Of course, one has to be aware of one's theoretical assumptions and pay attention to the differences of the Russian context in relation to the Western one. On the other hand, it is good to keep in mind, that there is no "naïve" reading; one always has assumptions and theories of reading, conscious and not conscious.

2 Patterns of civic activity in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia

1 Other terms that refer to this sphere are 'semi-public sphere' (Temkina 1997; Rotkirch 2000) and 'alternative public sphere' (Pursiainen 1998, 81–85).

2 NGOization is a wider tendency affecting activism worldwide; see Alvarez (1998) and Lang (1997).

3 This is the main piece of legislation regulating activities of civic organizations. The law defines civic associations (*obshchestvennye ob''edineniia*) as voluntary, self-governing, non-commercial entities that are created by citizens on the basis of common interests and in order to realize common goals. In the law, civic associations are divided into six organizational-juridical categories: civic organization (*obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*); social movement (*obshchestvennoe dvizhenie*); societal foundation (*obshchestvennyi fond*); societal agency (*obshchestvennoe uchrezhdenie*); and organ of societal initiative (*organ obshchestvennoi samodeiatel'nosti*).

4 This topic has been extensively studied e.g. by Hemment (2004a, 2004b; 2007); Richter (2002); Wedel (1998) and Henderson (2003).

5 Result of the chi-Square test: 0.034. Statistical significance levels: Almost significant: $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$, significant $0.001 < p \leq 0.01$, highly significant: $p \leq 0.001$.

6 Romanov's (2002) study also shows that every third civic organization in the Samara region and 68 percent of the women's groups Henderson (2003, 53) surveyed had no paid staff.

7 White (1999, 92) has documented how this argument was also used in explaining gendered patterns of participation during perestroika. According to her, a deputy chair of a public utility fund commented that "from the very start, salaries at the Fund were small … so on the whole the staff was female."

8 Twenty-seven percent of the surveyed organizations had their own office but no paid staff, and 10 percent had paid staff but not their own office.

9 In the Soviet era, the term *obshchestvennaia organizatsiia* referred to "citizens' voluntary associations that advance the development of citizens' organizational initiative (*samodeiatel'nosti*) and political activism" (*Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia* 1954).

10 Education was also most often chosen as the most important form of activity by 34 percent of the organizations. Education usually refers to offering courses and organizing enlightenment campaigns in a range of issues.

11 The Chi-Square test: 0.000, $p \leq 0.001$.

12 Diani (2004, 342) distinguishes in a similar vein between private and associational networks.

13 "Membership in organizations is an extension of the interpersonal social tie. (…) In other words, belonging to an organization is a good way to meet people and the likelihood of being pulled into social-movement activity increases through this contact with others." McAdam and Paulsen (1993, 644).

14 The figure is even higher, 91 percent, if those leaders with uncompleted higher education are included. Several scholars have also observed the active, even dominant, role of the intelligentsia in post-Soviet civic activities (Berg 2004; Yanitsky 2000; Zdravomyslova 2005). In the survey, we also probed leaders about the general educational level of their organization's members. Most leaders (57%) pointed out that their members represent more than one educational level. However, 33 percent stated that their members have primarily higher education, while only nine respondents stated that their members represented primarily some other educational level.

15 The dominant position of the educated classes also has been noted in the West. Members of voluntary organizations are often better educated than population on average (Wuthnow 1991, quoted in Helander 2002, 126).

16 Thirteen percent of the surveyed organizations in Tver' reported gathering in various educational institutions. During fieldwork, I also encountered a number of organizations that operated under the auspices of educational institutions.

17 For example, in the survey conducted of Russian human rights organizations, 72 percent reported that the efficacy of the organization suffered primarily from lack of finances (Sheregi and Abrosimova 2002, 327).

18 In Samara region, the most important funding source for civic groups is also membership dues (Romanov 2002).

19 The interviewees often made a distinction between *obshchestvennaia zhizn'* and *politicheskaia zhizn'*. They tended to use *obshchestvennaia zhizn'* synonymously with *obshchestvennye organizatsii*, and occasionally with *obshchestvennost'*.

20 The term 'political' tends to have negative connotations and it is often connected with party politics and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This can, in part, explain why few organizations wish to associate their activities with this term.

21 Chi-Square test: 0.027; $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$.

22 In order to make the quotes more readable, some expletives (*vot, voobshche, kak by,* etc.) have been omitted. **Bold** in the quotes means that the interviewee emphasized the word(s); (…) means that some sentences or words have been left out. … means that the interviewee does not end the sentence. / means that interviewees speak partly at the same time. [] means that words have been added to the sentence in order to clarify its content.

3 Gender in socio-political activity: power, participation and agency

1 I am aware of the problematic of the concept of patriarchy, and do not employ it here as a universal or ahistorical explanation for women's oppression. However, I

feel that the distinction between public and private patriarchy is instructive here as it highlights the changing arrangements of gendered power. About patriarchy and its criticism in feminist debate, see e.g. Walby (1991) and Pateman (1989).

2 Kiblitskaia (2000) notes that the ideology of a male breadwinner was also preserved in the Soviet Union, because although both men and women were engaged in paid work, men tended to earn more than women. The male breadwinner ideology has, however, become more pronounced in contemporary Russia.

3 The analysis is based on thirty thematic interviews, in which thirteen male and twenty-nine female civic activists participated, and on the survey of civic organizations presented in the previous chapter. In the thematic interviews, we asked the activists directly about their thoughts concerning gender relations and differences in socio-political participation, but some of them also reflected upon this issue spontaneously. In the survey, the respondents were posed three questions concerning gender relations: (1) Does the work of your organization better suit women, men or equally both? (2) Does the leader's gender play a role in civic organizations, and if it does, how does it manifest itself? (3) If there are more women or men participating in your organization, how would you explain it? In the thematic interviews, the activists primarily contemplated women's and men's participation in politics and organizations, in general, while in the survey the respondents primarily articulated gender relations in light of their organization.

4 This presumambly partly stems from the different formulation of questions in the survey and thematic interviews.

5 Essentialism refers to the idea that things have an 'essence', which is perceived as immutable. In the context of feminist debate, essentialism has referred to the idea of 'natural' and universal sexual difference (Schor 1994, 42). Essentialist thinking is based upon an assumption that biology grounds and justifies social norms (Moi 1999, 20). A distinction has been drawn between biological essentialism – the biologically given origin of female and male essence – and cultural/psychological essentialism – historically or socially given female/male essence ingrained in 'experience'; for example, perceptions of women as caring and empathetic (Rojola 1996; Grosz 1994). Essentializing is also a central strategy in *stereotyping*: stereotypes are often constructed upon essentialist assumptions (for more detail see Hall 1997, 257–59).

6 Yukina (2003, 78) has also observed how the perestroika-era women's organizations in Leningrad were most often *mothers'* organizations.

7 This Russian folk proverb means that women can do everything and they are up to anything.

8 These are often-cited lines from the famous poem "The Russian Women" by the Russian poet Nekrasov.

9 The expression is familiar from the story of Ivan the Fool (Ivan Durak) in Russian folktales.

10 There has, indeed, occurred a polarization among Russian men between those who are deeply marginalized, marked by early death and heavy drinking, and those 'New Russians' who dominate the political and economic elites (Burawoy *et al.* 2000; Ashwin 2006a). Differences among women are not polarized to the same extent: there are considerably fewer women in the economic and political elites and women's culturally strong role in the private domain has protected them from marginalization during the turbulent transition (cf. Ashwin 2006b).

11 In Russian and Soviet culture, disinterest and even hostility towards *byt* has been a typical feature (Boym 1994; Heikkinen 2002, 139). *Byt* is associated with women and femininity: the Bolshevik project constructed backward *byt* as the feminine antipode to the active and rational male revolution, and the devaluation of and hostility towards *byt* also survived during late socialism (Rotkirch 2000, 11).

12 Popkova (2004) also documents a similar strategy in her interviews with women politicians.

13 Family metaphors have been frequently employed in imagining the socio-political space in post-Soviet Russia (Ushakin 2004).

14 Indeed, when the grant stopped and she had a baby, she stopped working in the organization.

15 Ashwin (2006b, 43) argues that the male breadwinner model has reinforced the sexual division of labor and men's advantage in the labor market. It has at the same time also marginalized men's role in the household, and reinforced cultural definition of the domestic sphere as women's responsibility. This sexual division of labor reproduces the idea of women as 'second-class employees' in the labor market.

16 Russian artist.

17 It is important to note that maternalism is a way to discursively frame women's agency; women's civic activity as a whole cannot be reduced to mothering, but it is more complex and multifaceted. On criticism for the metaphor of motherhood, see Koivunen (1998).

18 This movement consisted of *obshchestvennitsy*, 'public spirited women', who performed unpaid societal work in hospitals, children's homes, and factories. They were supposed to work as helpmates to their husbands and the Soviet state at large, and to perform social control by promoting *kul'turnost'*, fighting alcoholism, absenteeism and a lack of work ethic. This movement, although drawing on the discourse of social motherhood, did not only limit activities to 'motherly duties', but also had other orientations. (Buckley 2001a, 2001b; Fitzpatrick 1999, 156–62.)

19 De Certeau defines 'strategy' as the grid of force-relationships and rules of the game that the powers that be define and within which tactical action can take place:

> The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. (…) because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing". (…) It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into "opportunities". (de Certeau 1984, xix)

Strategic and tactical action, thus, operate according to different logics: strategy relies on space, tactics upon time. Tactical action subverts the dominant representations and practices not by rejecting them, but by using them with respect to ends that the strategy does not envision. In this way, the power of the dominant order can be deflected. Tactics does not directly challenge the dominant order, but as de Certeau (ibid., xiii) puts it, a tactic escapes the system without leaving it.

20 There are no statistically significant differences between organizations established during the Soviet era and post-Soviet era in terms of the distribution of sexes in the organizational membership.

21 Fifty-two percent of the leaders are men and 48 percent women. The statistical analysis shows that women tend to run female-dominated groups and men male-dominated groups. Men also run groups that have equal male and female members more often than women do.

22 White (1999, 16–17) reports that two-thirds of the leaders of the perestroika-era voluntary organizations she surveyed were men. Yanitsky (2000, 72) has observed that from the 1980s onwards, a new environmental movement developed based on local initiative groups in urban neighbourhoods and, in the beginning, these activists were all women.

23 Zelikova's (1996) study of charitable organizations in St. Petersburg shows that over 80 percent of the members in these organizations were women.

24 Only one relatively small party reported having more female than male members and a female leader.
25 Household surveys in Russia show that women devote considerably more time to domestic work than men (Ashwin 2006b, 46–47). This leaves women more susceptible to 'time poverty' (Lister 1997, 133), which has important implications for women's ability to act as citizens in the public sphere.
26 Berg (2004), in her study about female NGO activists in Uzbekistan, has found similar arguments.
27 Chi-Square test: 0.008, $0.001 < p \leq 0.01$.
28 *Siloviki* refers to "personnel in the Russian force structures (*silovye struktury*), that is, in Russia's armed forces and uniformed services" (Renz 2006, 903).
29 Public discourses pertaining to civic activity will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

4 Action and affective ties: identity formation of the Centre for Women's History and Gender Studies

1 In Russian: *Tsentr zhenskoi istorii i gendernykh issledovanii.*
2 *Zhenskii Svet* could also be translated as 'Women's World', but 'Women's Light' is the translation the group itself adopted.
3 Valentina Ivanovna, born in the 1950s, has worked at Tver′ State University for more than three decades. She was originally trained as a historian, but works as a professor at the Department of Sociology and Political Science. She became politically active in the wake of perestroika. Her interest in feminism began already in childhood, when she familiarized herself with the life of Aleksandra Kollontai. In the 1970s, she wrote her dissertation about Western conceptions of women's emancipation. She also actively began to explore the history of the Russian women's movement. For a detailed description of *Zhenskii Svet*, see Hemment (2007).
4 An interesting parallel is that feminist activities in Imperial Russia also followed the form of *kruzhki* (see Stites 1978).
5 Open society is a concept developed by the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941). It refers to a non-authoritarian society, in which the state is responsive and tolerant and political freedoms and human rights are respected. The concept also plays a key role in the mission statement of the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute.
6 A former member of *Zhenskii Svet* described Valentina Ivanovna's position in the group by comparing her to a television: "She basically worked alone. She talked, you know, like a TV set: once switched on, she started talking, she was listened to."
7 Envy and frictions within women's groups that Western contacts and resources brought about have been extensively discussed, among others, by Kay (2000), Sperling (1999), and Hemment (2007).
8 A similar strategy has also been adopted by a number of other Centers for Gender Studies in Russia, for example, in Petrozavodsk (Heikkinen 1998, 45).
9 Civic organizations usually have to pay taxes for their activities in Russia.
10 He in fact described himself in this way: "I don't generally like civic organizations. I'm an anti-societal element (*antiobshchestvennyi element*), I prefer to be on my own." He explained that he participates in the group because his wife asked him to, but he also claimed to support the ideas of the CGS.
11 Gender studies have flourished in the post-Soviet space, mostly because of the financial support of foreign donors. One sign of this success is that the number of centers of gender studies and scholars engaged in them has notably increased during the last decade. We discussed this issue with Valentina Ivanovna and she

pointed out that the availability of funding has also created unintended side-effects: people get involved with gender studies without committing themselves to feminism, which runs the danger of watering down feminism as a political project.

12 However, Western contacts have also turned from a symbolically valued resource into an issue raising suspicion during recent years.

13 Rivkin-Fish (2005) has observed a similar discourse of individualization and a 'moral transition in persons' in the context of health care institutions and practices.

14 The emphasis on community and the individuals' responsibility towards it is reminiscent of the communitarian ethic in the West, although the processes giving rise to this ethic in Russian and Western societies are different.

15 Paternalism is in Russia closely connected with patronage (Ashwin 1999) and they both are manifestations of gendered power relations. Paternalism discourse usually manifests itself in two interconnected modes. First, paternalism has been understood as a characteristic of the Russian state system (*state paternalism*). The Soviet social welfare contract could be characterized as paternalistic, because the state, and only the state, provided social protection for the citizens and it was not possible to articulate social needs from below and organize alternative services (cf. Deacon 2000). However, state paternalism often slips into *mental paternalism*: paternalism is represented as a characteristic of the Russian *people*. In this version, Russians are portrayed as submissive, prone to eternal suffering, unenterprising and longing for a strong leader. This paternalistic mindset is perceived either as the result of the Soviet system or as having longer historical and/or psychic roots. This view is problematic, first, because it tends to portray paternalism as an essentialist and ahistorical feature of the Russian people. Although paternalism is often interpreted as being caused by a Soviet socialization process, paternalism is nevertheless portrayed as something for which Russians have an 'inclination'. Second, owing to this essentialist undertone, the mental paternalism discourse fails to acknowledge human agency. It ignores the creative everyday tactics that people relied upon in the Soviet system and rely on in post-Soviet society to survive.

16 This is obviously also a telling manifestation of the discredited nature of the Russian legal system.

17 This project was supported by the Russian Ministry of Education and the Soros Foundation.

18 The idea of founding a publishing house had, however, already been discussed in *Zhenskii Svet*. It became again topical in 2002 when the CGS received a grant for publishing an anthology of articles. The grant was awarded only for printing costs. CGS members felt this was unjust, because they could not pay anything to those CGS members who edited the book. The idea behind establishing Feminist Press in connection with the CGS was that the Center could decide independently how to distribute the grant. This illustrates the way in which organizations negotiate the constraints set by foreign donors.

19 For example, one journalist team interviewed Valentina Ivanovna and her students for a television program. They cut the clip at the end in a way that greatly dissatisfied Valentina Ivanovna. In particular, she was exasperated by the fact that one of the journalists concluded the clip by saying "girls, don't forget that you are the weaker sex (*slabyi pol*) after all", a statement that is totally against the ideology of the CGS.

20 Howard (2002a, 293) has argued that a major obstacle for the development of civil society in post-communist societies are people's negative experiences of state-run organizations, which also evoke mistrust toward contemporary civic organizations. Valentina Ivanovna also referred to this point in her interview: "That's probably also why people often don't want to [participate in organizations],

because they understand civic activities in their Soviet sense – when everybody was told 'You must attend meetings!'"

21 This motto was also written in "The moral code of the builder of communism" (*Moral'nyi kodeks stroitelia kommunizma*) adopted in connection with the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in 1961. It was formulated as follows: "*Kollektivizm i tovarishcheskaia vzaimopomoshch': Kazhdyi za vsekh, vse za odnogo*".

22 Viktoriia Ivanovna commented in a similar vein in her interview: "Civil society is a society where the interests of each individual are superior to those of the state."

23 A similar interpretation was put forward by a member of a student human rights organization in Tver': "We have only few citizens who actually bear responsibility for their actions [and] who do things and take decisions, who (…) are able to have a stance in life. In civil society, I believe, at least 60 per cent should have these qualities."

24 I did not directly ask them about these concepts.

25 This refers to the process of the centralization of power in Moscow and in the hands of the President and his administration and the creation of a vertically organized chain of command.

26 According to a small survey that Valentina Ivanovna's students conducted among Tver' townspeople, feminism was perceived as a threat to male existence, family life and the state. In state socialism, the family was experienced (and often idealized) as "both a haven from and a site of resistance to the long arm of the state" (Einhorn 1993, 6). It has been suggested that if in Western societies, the fundamental division is constructed between public and private spheres, in state socialism it was constructed between the state and the family (Funk 1993, 322–23).

27 The Russian term *gender* was introduced in the 1990s. See Ushakin (2002) for an interesting critical discussion about the usage and applicability of the *pol/gender* distinction in Russia.

28 Raisa Borisovna had 'updated' the concept of the 'woman question' and talked about 'gender question' (*gendernyi vopros*) in her interview.

29 "*Strashno daleki oni ot naroda, uzok krug etikh revoliutsionerov!*" Decembrists were officers who revolted against the Russian Tsar in 1825. They advocated liberal values and demanded the abolition of serfdom and the introduction of a constitution.

30 The ties between the CGS and *Gortenziia* are very close. Valentina Ivanovna, for example, referred to *Gortenziia* as "our people (*svoi*)". Students attending the CGS's classes have conducted volunteer work in *Gortenziia*, and the members of *Gortenziia* have participated in the activities of the CGS.

31 There is an interesting parallel to this in revolutionary Russia. Yurchak (2005, 38) discusses how the invention of new words and borrowing of words from other languages was an integral part of the revolutionary period in Russia (1910–20): the unfamiliar sound of this new language served as a powerful tool for revolutionizing consciousness. The new vocabulary of gender studies, I argue, could serve the same purpose.

32 The emphasis on individuality was also a core value for Soviet dissidents (Urban *et al.* 1997, 39).

33 *Obshchenie* refers to communication, interaction, conversation and spending time together. It involves intense and intimate commonality and intersubjectivity. *Obshchenie* has the same roots as the words *obshchii* (common) and *obshchina* (commune). (Yurchak 2004, 148.) Yurchak suggests that *obshchenie* can be understood as "a process and a sociality that emerges in that process, and both an exchange of ideas and information as well as a space of affect and togetherness". Thus, *obshchenie* crucially involves *emotional* engagement.

34 She put the accent on the 'a', thus associating Cosa Nostra with femininity (words ending with 'a' in Russian are feminine in gender).

35 Family and kin metaphors repeatedly emerged in the context of civic activity and of definitions of national identity in my data. They are, of course, also very common in other cultures in imagining national collectivities (see McClintock 1995; Gordon, Komulainen and Lempiäinen 2002). Ushakin (2004, 10) observes that kin metaphors have, in general, played a key role in conceptualizing political, economic and cultural development in post-Soviet Russia. Ashwin (1999, 11, 148–50) shows in her research on industrial relations in a mining community that workers often refer to their workplace as a 'second family'. Valentina Ivanovna posited in one of her interviews family ties as a fruitful model not only for civic but also for economic organizations: "That's what I like: those who start a business, it's their most dear ones that they rely upon. It's the family. (…) The principle looks like this: we join together as a family and then start helping those we feel for."

36 Emotions have had a significant role, in general, in the women's liberation movement, which has tended to devote much energy to creating bonds of trust, love and mutual respect (Goodwin *et al.* 2004, 420).

37 The role of emotions in collective action has recently gained increasing attention among social movement scholars; see e.g. Goodwin *et al.* (2001); Goodwin and Jasper (2004).

38 I suggest that Russian activists apply to dealing with donors the same logic that is characteristic of *blat* practices, i.e., they understand interaction with donors to depend on personal informal contacts. Wedel (1997, 112) has contended that in many cases, indeed, foreign donor agencies have tended to reproduce the socialist-era practices of patronage and personal connections.

39 Patronage was characteristic of Soviet leaders. Ken Jowitt has suggested that the Soviet system of rule was personalistic and 'patrimonial': an institution's status and power were inseparable from the man in charge (quoted in Fitzpatrick 1999, 32).

40 In fact, in 2006 Valentina Ivanovna told me she had offered the leadership of the Center to three core members, but none of them were willing to take up the position.

5 The weakness of collective identity: the Trade Union of Health Care Workers

1 In Russian: *Tverskoi oblast'noi professional'nyi soiuz rabotnikov zdravookhraneniia*.

2 Ashwin (1999, 138–42) points at the identity dimension when she suggests that the lack of workers' mobilization is partly caused by workers' 'shifting identifications'. She does not, however, develop further this dimension of mobilization.

3 There is an interesting gender dimension here: the alternative unions have predominantly been founded in the male-dominated and well paid sectors such as coal-mining and air-traffic control, whereas the female-dominated budget sectors – education, health care and culture – have remained within the traditional trade union representation (see Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 1–3).

4 As a result of the reduction in income and the narrowing of the unions' functions during the 1990s, the staff in *obkom* offices has notably decreased (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 93–94).

5 This obviously affected the selection of participants I met. Practically all my interviewees were union activists, which served my research interests well, as I wished to talk in particular with active members.

6 Sixty-four percent of the doctors, 72 percent of the nurses, 66 percent of other health care personnel and 99 percent of students in medical schools belong to the TUHW.

7 In the Tver' TUHW, 86 percent of the members are women. In 2001, the average monthly salary in the health care sector in Tver' region was 1162 RUR (45 USD).

8 For example, in one of the TUHW's presidium meetings it was discussed how to solve the problem that some hospital workers, because of their low salaries, fetch alcohol for patients in exchange for money, and occasionally even drink together with them.

9 The payments for the Insurance Fund are collected from a payroll tax that all employers pay and the state pays for the non-working population (Rivkin-Fish 2005, 79).

10 In 2002, the first private surgery services were opened in Tver′. These services were offered in connection with a public hospital. This was strongly disapproved of by *obkom* president Galina Leonidovna, who felt that having both private and public services in the same establishment made the erosion of the egalitarian provision of social welfare too visible. When I asked my friends in Tver′ why there were so few private health services available, they claimed that the political and economic elites in the region use private clinics in nearby Moscow and thus there is no pressure on their side to improve the level of public health services.

11 Competition over work accomplishments between work collectives and members of socialist society.

12 According to Ivanov *et al.* (2006, 422), informal payments are higher and more frequent in the poorest regions, which implies that regional disparities in state funding are alleviated in this way. However, Ivanov *et al.* (ibid., 421) note that informal payments were also commonplace in the Soviet Union.

13 Trade unions in the West are trusted significantly more than the trade unions in post-communist societies (Crowley n.d.).

14 Ashwin and Clarke (2003, 112), in their assessment of the Labor Code, also observe that it gives more discretion to the employers and decreases the role of the unions in managing employment issues.

15 This echoes the character repertoire that was discussed in Chapter 3.

16 The central principle of the Communist morality and ethic is self-sacrifice for the common good. A more detailed list of qualities that an ideal *Homo Sovieticus* was to have can be found in the "Moral Code of the Builder of Communism" adopted in 1961. This code includes, among others, the following principles: conscientious labor for the good of society, a high sense of public duty, a collectivist attitude, moral purity, and modesty (see Muckle 1987).

17 These qualities attached to medical workers were seldom explicitly gendered. However, we can suggest that they are implicitly gendered, since the sector is strongly female-dominated.

18 Frequent references to Russianness in this context may also have stemmed partly from my position as a Finnish interviewer.

19 However, as was pointed out earlier, the egalitarian provision of health services started eroding already during the Soviet era.

20 The legal base of trade unions is stipulated in the following laws: Labor Code (2001); Law on Trade Unions, their Rights and Guarantees of their Activities (1996); Law on Collective Bargaining and Argereements (1995); and Law on Collective Labor Disputes (1995) (Ashwin and Clarke 2003).

21 In fact, Soviet parades apparently served this same function. One interviewee in Yurchak's (2006, 121) study, when remembering Soviet parades, states that "the parade was simply one more celebration where you met your friends and acquaintances and had fun. It was not really experienced as an ideological event … ".

22 Alapuro and Lonkila (2000, 87) note that Russian teachers also explained their reluctance to go into strike with a similar argument: the strike would harm pupils.

23 The *obkom* legal advisor had visited two regional hospitals. One hospital was administered in a very good manner, whereas the other one, located in the

countryside, had been on a verge of destruction. The hospital building was dilapidated and a sixteen-year-old girl was the only employee present in the hospital. She was not familiar with the new Labor Code and the legal requirements she was supposed to fulfill in administering employment issues. The hospital staff had not received their salaries and apparently they had stopped coming to work; the hospital did not have any staff or patients at the time of the visit. It seemed that the hospital had *de facto* ceased to function. This forms an interesting contrast to the representation of medical workers as altruistic, coming to work in every situation and not being able to go into strike.

24 This gap and lack of information between the higher organs of the trade union and the grassroots level was also noted in the TUHW's annual report in 2001 as a problem requiring further attention (*Ob''iasnitel'naia zapiska* …).

25 October 1 is the Day of Senior Citizens.

26 Galina Leonidovna's reference to continuities from the Soviet era in the Union work as 'remnants' (*ostatki*) is interesting, since the official Soviet discourse used this term to refer to phenomena that drew on Tsarist Russia and were to wither away with the progress of socialism.

27 This social dialogue is also a central part of the social partnership model in the European Union (Raik 2004, 22).

28 This lack of articulation of a worker identity also manifests itself in the Law on Trade Unions, which defines trade unions as citizens' associations (*ob''edinenia grazhdan*) and not as workers' (*naemye rabotniki*) associations (Peschanskii 1998, 81).

29 Civic organizations are also legally regulated, but TUHW members did not mention this, perhaps because they were not aware of it.

30 We were faced with this fact when we carried out the survey in Tver' after the State Duma elections in 2004. It was very difficult to reach people from those parties that had experienced electoral defeat. According to my research assistant, the offices of these parties were empty; no one answered the telephone and often the local party leaders had been dismissed.

31 The FNPR, in its attempts to redefine the position of the trade unions, has tried to distance itself from the Communist Party, but in regional trade union branches, such as the TUHW, Communist sympathies tend to be widespread (Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 69; Biziukov 2002).

32 Cars often emerge as a central signifier of class status in Russia. Rivkin-Fish (2005, 192) quotes one of her informants, who illustrates the difference between poor doctors and rich patients by saying "Some arrive and leave in Mercedes, while we doctors walk home on foot." Howard (2003, 132–33) also provides similar examples.

6 Redefining citizenship: views of the authorities

1 See Nikitin and Buchanan (2002) and Weigle (2002) for a more detailed discussion of the Civic Forum.

2 In the Soviet Union, civil society was defined as an institution characteristic of capitalist societies; such a bourgeois institution could not possibly exist in a communist society that had done away with the antagonism between state and society.

3 According to Zdravomyslova (1996, 24), in the mid-1990s the concept of civil society also became less ideological and turned rather into a professional concept, used by political scientists and sociologists.

4 One of the most influential Kremlin aides, Vladislav Surkov, has coined this term, which means that Russian democracy should be developed by domestic forces without the interference of foreign powers, especially the US.

5 As far as I know, such liaison officers were not nominated after all.

6 Warren (2001, 209) has observed a similar process in a number of Latin American countries: "States establish and finance associations as means of social control, a practice that has led to a powerful, privileged and well-protected layer of secondary associations (…) that (…) serve as means for the state to co-opt individual and political autonomy."

7 Some activists also discussed this issue of control through funding. One of them concluded that civic organizations can, in principle, freely criticize the authorities, but if they wish to receive funding from the authorities, they as a rule refrain from it.

8 In 2001, the Council consisted of fourteen representatives of civic organizations.

9 In 2002, eighteen social units operated in different administrative branches.

10 According to Sheregi and Abrosimova (2002, 338), 67 percent of Russian federal subjects have a person or a unit in executive power whose responsibility it is to maintain contacts with civic groups. In 28 percent, no such person or unit exists (about the remaining 5 percent there is no information).

11 This same idea was, in fact, inherent also in the Soviet practice of societal work (*obshchestvennaia rabota*): the Soviet authorities saw it as a way to ease the state's social burden (White 1999, 44).

12 In this categorization, I draw on Mark E. Warren's (2001) work on democracy and association.

13 This emphasis on professionalism in civic activity is in striking contrast to Lenin's famous postulate that "Every cook has to know how to govern the state."

14 Similar views were also presented by some civic activists.

15 The term *izhdivenchestvo* was used in the Soviet Union to refer to a condemnable parasitism, i.e., not being employed in paid work but living at others' expense.

7 Collaboration and contestation: views of the activists

1 The reference to "her cause" is revealing of the Center's gravitation towards Valentina Ivanovna.

2 The CGS pays an overhead from its grants to the university.

3 Valentina Ivanovna represented the CGS in the Council at first herself, but later transferred the position to Raisa Borisovna, "so that the city authorities wouldn't again rely only upon one surname ('Uspenskaia')". This was hence an attempt to decrease the Center's dependency on Valentina Ivanovna.

4 Interestingly, no one in the CGS referred to the notion of the third sector when envisioning the division of labor between the state and organizations.

5 Other activists also voiced this interpretation in Tver'.

6 This is a widespread impression in Russia and was also conveyed to me several times by a number of activists during the fieldwork.

7 Ashwin and Clarke (2003) quote trade union activists voicing similar views. The authors point out that regional union branches have expressed greatest skepticism concerning social partnership, because they have not been able to gain tangible results from it. Enforcement of the agreements is weak and there are no sanctions for breaking them.

8 The FNPR President commented in 1994 as follows:

> Today it is clear that a decisive, open confrontation with the regime would throw our trade unions into the backwaters of public life, would deprive them of all of the constitutional means of defending interests of the toilers, and would be a real threat to the existence of the [FNPR] and of FNPR unions as a whole. (quoted in Ashwin and Clarke 2003, 46)

9 Several organization leaders in the survey also reported how their co-operation ties had unraveled as a result of the changes in power.

10 After the Crisis Center was closed down, there was no place in Tver′ to provide help in situations of domestic and sexual violence. Ocasionally people turned to the CGS for help. For example, Valentina Ivanovna told me about a student whose girlfriend had been raped. He contacted Valentina Ivanovna and started attending frequently the CGS's evening school and library, trying to find out everything he could about gendered violence.

11 This type of local alliance between the authorities and trade unions is common in the Russian trade union movement, since the movement has fragmented and the local political environment has begun to play an ever greater role for regional union branches (see Ashwin and Clarke 2003).

12 The understanding of organizational activities as heavily leader-centered also came up in Chapter 5, when the activists said that the TUHW does not support any parties, but only party leaders.

13 Most organizations I studied in Tver′, especially the new ones, saw the individual influence as primary: they oriented their activities to certain social groups rather than seeking to influence the state, although many of them sought funding from it.

14 Opinion polls also have reported this view: by the mid-1990s up to 80 percent of Russians were of the opinion that "the Russian authorities take little interest in the opinions of common people like us" and "the people governing the country do not care what happens to individuals" (Petukhov 2005, 10–12).

15 An all-Russian survey in 2003 reveals that Russians perceive personal connections as the second most effective way to influence the authorities. However, it is notworthy that most respondents, 46 percent, saw that there simply are no effective means of influence (Petukhov 2005, 10).

16 The trade unions do try to participate in the formation of public opinion by publishing their own newspaper, *Trud*. However, none of the interviewed TUHW activists mentioned it as a potential channel of influence.

17 Interestingly, the majority of the authorities interviewed in Tver′ tended to have a more positive view of the trade unions' institutional influence than the TUHW activists themselves.

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