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Producing *Kartinka:* Street-Level Bureaucracy and Implementation of Russia's Tolerance Policy in St. Petersburg

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Abstract

In 2006, a "tolerance policy" was launched in St. Petersburg to address the growing xenophobia and the need to integrate labor migrants. Applying a bottom–up perspective, this study finds that this policy was *symbolic* – aimed at changing public attitudes, not at providing material outcomes. The direct implementers (the street-level bureaucracy), operating under governmental constraints, drew on informal mechanisms: behind-the-scenes negotiations, unwritten rules and hierarchies, personalist power, and ideological cues. Formalized dense reporting, often quantitative, was used to keep low-level implementers in check. The combination of these features rendered the tolerance policy shallow and self-locked. Street-level bureaucracy had to interpret vague policy documents, but lacked the necessary discretionary powers. This gave rise to the *kartinka* (picture, or image) coping technique. The term describes how all work activities were shaped by the need to demonstrate progress with respect to unwritten rules and ideological dynamics. The article concludes with a discussion of the applicability of the author's findings to the field of nationalities policy in Russia.

Keywords: nationalities policy; Russian nation building; street-level bureaucracy

Introduction

After Putin came to power in 2000, reforms unfolded in various areas. Along with state-building initiatives (the power vertical) the Kremlin sought to reassemble society ideologically after the 1990s collapse. Under the "nationalities policy," measures were taken in identity politics, (symbolic) nation building, with the instrumental tasks of combating the upsurge in ethnic xenophobia and extremism (Center Panorama 2003), and integration of labor migrants (Pain 2007; Laryš and Mareš 2011; Shnirel'man 2011; Worger 2012; Semenenko 2015, 313–316; Chapman et al. 2018). Official state symbols were adopted, new "patriotic" holidays introduced, and ideas of patriotism promoted.

One such measure was a *symbolic policy*[1] aimed at "strengthening and promoting tolerance." The federal target program, *federal'naia tselevaia programa* (formation of attitudes of the tolerant consciousness and prevention of extremism in the Russian society) was adopted in 2001. The document vaguely stated: "The formation of attitudes of tolerant consciousness and behavior, religious tolerance and peacefulness, the prevention of various types of extremism, and countering them are of particular relevance for multinational (*mnogonatsional'naia*) Russia, due to the continuing social tension in society, ongoing inter-ethnic and inter-confessional conflicts, the growth of separatism and national [ethnic] extremism, which are a direct threat to the country's

security. All this was most clearly manifested in the North Caucasus in the form of outbreaks of xenophobia, fascism, fanaticism, and fundamentalism" (Pravitel'stvo Rossii 2001).[2]

This policy was symbolic – it sought to change public attitudes and to graft new values, like tolerance, into the reforged national identity. The stated objective was to achieve a rather instrumental and tangible goal – that of coping with xenophobia and extremism. Measures included providing retraining courses for officials, police officers, journalists, teachers; issuing brochures, textbooks, guidebooks for teachers on diversity in the schoolroom; and conducting advertising campaigns promoting tolerance (Filippov 2003).

A key figure here was Valentina Matvienko, then a deputy prime minister of the government (1998–2003) and later governor of St. Petersburg (2003–2011), who had developed a personal interest in the ideology of tolerance after attending an international conference on the Holocaust in Stockholm in 2000. She delivered to Vladimir Putin a draft of the tolerance program (Sungurov and Boiarkov 2011, 199) elaborated by a group of liberal-minded experts and academics headed by Alexander Asmolov, a deputy minister of education (1992–1998) and a well-known psychologist.

At the federal level, the policy failed to achieve institutionalization beyond two budget programs (the second one, focused on research, ran from 2009 to 2011) and changes in discourse. No separate laws or legislation on the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities were adopted, beyond ratification of international treaties (Prina 2016). Laws on citizenship (Shevel 2012) and migration policies were even tightened under Putin.

Before the first program was curtailed in 2004, the regions, in line with the federal agenda, incorporated the word *tolerance* into the titles of their programs on nationalities policies. This changed, with a few exceptions. For example, in St. Petersburg, several programs launched on the personal initiative of Valentina Matvienko operated from 2006 to 2014. One program received the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence in 2009.

Although Russia's nationalities policy and nation building is a well-researched topic, some studies dismiss the policy of tolerance as mere window-dressing for the state's failures (see Osipov 2002; Osipov 2010b, 55; Prina 2012, 68, 168, 207). Its implementation St. Petersburg has received attention from local researchers, some of whom were involved in the policy process (Mukomel 2005; Sungurov and Boiarkov 2011; Achkasov and Rozanova 2013; Klimenko 2014; Rozanova 2016). Focusing on the top–down perspective, these authors agree that the liberal underpinnings of the program were eroded by the changing political climate in Russia, and the program became bogged down in red tape. But looking on from the perspective of the top–down dynamics and actors, as these studies do, cannot provide a complete picture of tolerance policy as practiced in St. Petersburg in the 2000s: comprehensive analysis requires a bottom–up perspective – of "ordinary executors" (Treib and Pülzl 2007, 89–107; Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2019, 345–50). The case of tolerance programs constitutes an empirical gap within the study of nationalities policies in Russia.

In what follows, I address three related questions: How did implementation proceed, as seen by ordinary employees? How did their working conditions, discretionary powers, and constraints affect the outcome? What can the working practices of immediate implementers say about the policy? Answering these questions can shed light on the set-up of Russia's nationalities policy, which is often criticized as inefficient.

In doing so, I employ two theoretical tools: (1) the concept of *symbolic policy*, and (2) the *street-level bureaucracy* approach.

Theoretical Toolkit

Symbolic Policy

Tolerance policy in Russia (federal and regional) was designed as a *symbolic* policy that nonetheless strove to achieve *palpable* changes. The state sought to change the mindset and behavior of the

populace by "asking" (that is, persuading) them to do so. The idea of applying this analytical distinction was prompted by the works of Alexander Osipov (2010a, 2012) and Vladimir Malakhov (2010) on nationalities policies in Russia. Osipov showed that the goal of the 1996 law on National-Cultural Autonomy was symbolic, signaling that the state would take care of troubling issues. The law used the "right" words, giving an impression of changing the paradigm of nationalities policies – but without real impact on the policy process, its procedures, or practices. This is echoed by other studies of ideational politics (Schmidt 2008).

However, this is a harsh way of construing symbolic policy: the policy serves as a shield against criticism – regardless of whether it yields results. I propose viewing a symbolic policy as one aimed at altering *public attitudes* too, although it may (and often will) become declaratory.

Symbolic policies are designed and implemented to change public attitudes, and they are intertwined with ideology and values. Their goals are often blurred and may be conflicting and difficult to evaluate by formal quantitative methods (Birkland 2016, 262–263). By contrast, material policies are associated with reforming political practices, changing decision-making mechanisms and rules, and are often technical (for example, fire safety or road construction policies). At the same time, any material/instrumental policy (actually, the body that manages it) strives for self-presentation and cares about reputation (Gilad, Maor, and Bloom 2015; Busuioc 2016); it deals with the media – and is thus involved in symbolic production. Correspondingly, symbolic policies often have room for instrumental measures.

Symbolic policies can be compared with an "ideal type" (to borrow Max Weber's term; Kim 2017, §5.2) of material policy, as with road construction. In material policy, the goal is clear and tangible, such as building roads for transport infrastructure or monitoring such a process. The formal report on the policy initiative will normally contain quantifiable information, such as the number and length of roads built. Such policies are less dependent on the ideological atmosphere than are symbolic policies.

Street-Level Bureaucracy

I draw on the theory of street-level bureaucracy, a term coined by Michael Lipsky (2010) in 1969 and developed in his (often reprinted)1980 book. In the original study, the term denotes state employees who interact with their audience (their clients) face to face – as do firefighters, teachers, social workers, and doctors.

Lipsky summarized the body of empirical data that had emerged by that time, showing that the bureaucracy – especially "street-level" bureaucracy – tended to deviate from what was intended by decision makers at the implementation stage. However, he continued, that should not be considered problematic. Quite the opposite, for street-level bureaucrats become the actual policy makers: "Their individual actions add up to agency behavior" (Lipsky 2010, 13). Further, members of the street-level bureaucracy exercise discretion in their work routines, continually having to decide how to proceed (if at all), because policy goals are vague, likewise the wording of laws and decrees establishing the policies (Lipsky 2010, 13–18).

Lipsky's account should be seen in the context of the top-down political science and policy studies of the 1980s (Treib and Pülzl 2007, 89–107). There were no implementation studies, as the focus was on the policy elaboration stage, involving higher bureaucracies and legislators. Any deviations from what was planned were viewed as oversights or errors, as per the normative Weberian model of bureaucracy (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2014, 6–8, 14, 18) – according to which bureaucracy should be impersonal, performing its tasks, and following universalized instructions, with no leeway (Brodkin 2012, 940; Zang 2016, 611–612, 614). Lipsky's work reflected the revision of such a normative approach.

This revision of analytical accounts coincided with the political movement of the new public management approach to state services in the 1980s (Olsen 2006; Christensen and Lægreid 2009; Egeberg and Trondal 2016. The aim, in line with neoliberal ideology, was to improve the efficiency

of public services: to reduce costs, and increase the responsibility and flexibility of the officials involved. Citizens were seen as "clients" who should be served properly by the state (Rowney and Huskey 2009a, 2). Although the 1990s and 2000s saw a rollback from the new public management approach (Christensen and Lægreid 2009, 951; Egeberg and Trondal 2016, 583–587) in its original form, the research perspective centered on the ideas of discretion and informal aspects of governance (Olsen 1997, 206; Heyman 2004; Suvarierol 2008; Hoag 2011). Indeed, discretion has been deemed necessary for the proper performance of street-level bureaucracy and for ensuring the fairness of policy implementation (Zang 2016, 612).

Bringing Theoretical Perspectives Together

Combining the street-level bureaucracy approach with the concept of symbolic policy, I hold that such a policy (rather, its successful implementation), requires considerable discretion on the part of street-level bureaucracies – more than with other policies. This is due to vague goals, the lack of sustained procedures, and evaluation criteria.

Applying the street-level bureaucracy model to the policy of tolerance in St. Petersburg necessitates additional explanation, as Lipsky was referring those who interact with the public (clients) face-to-face. With the policy of tolerance in St. Petersburg, who was "appointed" as direct communicators with policy recipients? The literature since Lipsky's initial work has included new categories of specialists in the study of street-level bureaucracy, expanding the theory and becoming more complex (Zang 2016, 615). Indeed, we can stretch the theory even further, for with a symbolic policy of tolerance, the whole society becomes a collective client, not only those individuals who deal with street-level bureaucrats (such as patients in a hospital).

Various actors involved in the policy process – journalists, civil servants, police officers undergoing retraining on tolerance, contractors – became clients of the tolerance policy. Journalists were to learn how to write with greater tolerance. Representatives of nongovernmental organizations that received financial (or other) support from the state to conduct their activities related to the tolerance ideology were at best mediators – not performers. Employees of the House of Nationalities[3] did not consider themselves actors in the policy of tolerance. They were aware of the intersection of their competencies but saw their work as focused on assisting official ethnic organizations and creating conditions to facilitate their activities – which is not the same as spreading tolerance. All this also pushed the staff of the tolerance policy department into the position of street-level bureaucracies – because there were no other candidates.

Ethnography Methodology and Data

In September–October 2013, I conducted two-month participant observation fieldwork at the Department of the Tolerance Policy in Saint Petersburg. Working as an ordinary street-level bureaucrat, I participated in drafting official documents, organized events, and communicated with contractors. I was in the office five days a week, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.[4] Everyone I interacted with knew about my research. Studies of the ethnography of bureaucracy claim that, due to the closed nature of the field, getting access is often more important than getting informed consent, and this is a legitimate ethical position. A brief discussion of various approaches to finding the way into the bureaucratic field can be found in Hahonou and Martin (2019, 11): "bureaucratic ethnography should be situated along a continuum between full overt and fully covert research, and the study of secretive organizations … is often only possible through partially covert participant observation." On entering the field, I explained that I was a postgraduate student and that I wished to join the department as an intern, as my academic interests lay in the area of nationalities and tolerance policies. I never concealed my organizational affiliation or my goals. I had made it clear that I wanted to study the policies administered and produced by the department. As my work progressed I took notes, primarily on my experiences and impressions.

The general ethical principle in qualitative research is, like that of the medical profession, "Do no harm." Adhering to that principle means not making the people featured in this article identifiable, so the names of all participants have been anonymized. In the text, I occasionally quote the participants: this is not the direct speech of employees but notes from my field diary, where I rephrased and translated all conversations (with a few crucial exceptions). Also relevant is the time gap between data collection in 2013 and this application, several years later. The department itself has long since disappeared, and it is difficult to find or identify those who worked there during my internship.

My data are supplemented by interviews in spring 2018 with two elaborators of the tolerance policy in St. Petersburg. These are scholars involved in the program as authors of the text of the program and in other capacities. These experts, like those who expressed themselves to the media, belong to liberal civil society, and their analytical attitudes to politics may reflect their political preferences. This is an important point, as I often draw on their judgments in determining the criteria for the success or failure of policy implementation.

Although I present the internal evolution of the policy and the ideological shift, features of the Russian governance and the officialdom are deduced, and to some extent they represent an analytical model. I strive for a snapshot of the situation in 2013, a special period in the final days of the policy.

I hold that the policy and the street-level bureaucracy suffered from constraints stemming from the conditions of Russian governance. Discretion available to the street-level bureaucracy had been dwindling, as *intuition* was emerging. There was the discrepancy between the normative demand for results and the structural impossibility of doing so. To deal with this discrepancy, employees deployed a coping technique called *kartinka* (picture, or image) an analytical metaphor derived from the usage of the street-level bureaucracy whom I observed. As a result, the policy became shallow.

Russian Governance and the Political Regime

Scholars routinely characterize Russia (or the Russian regime) as being authoritarian or neopatrimonial, rather than democratic or legal-rational.[5] Claiming that Russian governance is neopatrimonial means that the regime does not rely on a rational-legal order in decision-making and decision-implementing that would include transparent governing procedures, blank institutions, free and fair elections, and public deliberations, through the media or parliamentary debate (Ledeneva 2013, 196). Rather, it relies on patronage networks, behind-the-scenes decisions, and intra-elite intrigues (Easter 2008, 215; Sakwa 2010; Hale 2014; Gel'man 2016; Robinson 2017).

Personalism, an important feature of the Russian regime, assumed the form of super-presidentialism, laid down in the 1990s. Then, in the 2000s, the presidency consolidated its standing. It came to dominate politics and decision making (Huskey 2009, 216; Sakwa 2010, 188; Gel'man and Starodubtsev 2016; Huskey 2016, 72; Wengle and Evans 2018, 385) and repressive laws and actions against political opposition and nongovernmental organizations involved in human rights promotion were introduced (J. W. Hahn 2004; G. M. Hahn 2004; Gill 2006; McFaul and Stoner-Weiss 2008; Petrone 2011; Smyth 2016; Flikke 2016). "The only institution that claims the mantle of ideological authority is President Putin, whose words are interpreted as the state-supported ideological tenets" (Lipman 2015, 121): vestiges of the "correct line" (Huskey 2014, 121). In lieu of public deliberation and official negotiation there emerged second-guessing of the autocrat's (hidden) messages (Teper 2016; Sakwa 2021, 237).

Neopatrimonialism, albeit opposed to rational-legal institutions, is empirically always a mixture. With neopatrimonial rule, formal institutions are not entirely diluted. Informal institutions permeate the formal ones, and the actual political process involves a combination of the two (Shkel 2019, 169). The system *strives* for formal (rational-legal) functioning, but every problem must be solved immediately, and the manual control method is used, undermining the formal

institutions (Gel'man 2004; 2012; Ledeneva 2013, 50, 89–90). High-ranking members of the system prefer to solve serious matters orally – without paperwork (Ledeneva 2013, 224), whereas the system produces huge amounts of formal documents, laws and decrees, instructions to be processed and adhered to (by the letter rather than in the spirit) in the course of administration (Oleinik 2008, 176–177). According to Richard Sakwa (2010, 187), Russia "is more than personalized leadership or neopatrimonialism, but less than an institutionalized, law-govern system." Such a dualism is reflected in the Kremlin's attempts to convey a new historical narrative to society (Gjerde 2015).

The combination of neopatrimonial and rational-legal governance practices is best understood in terms of the vertical structuring of power in Russia. A bureaucratic office is split into more prestigious and less prestigious units. There is a difference between the upper level of bureaucracy (more liberal, better educated, with varied backgrounds) and the lower level (who value discipline, and focus on executing orders and ensuring the document flow) (Rogozin 2015, 26–28; Novikov 2015, 91). Officials in prestigious federal units (in the field of resources and economics) are often relatively well-educated; many come from outside the civil service; moreover, dismissal is rare (Fortescue 2020). The reliance upon formal mechanisms is profound in the elite Ministry of the Economic Development, even among rank-and-file employees, in contrast to regional bureaucracies (Basil'evich and Podkolzina 2009, 258–259; Zweynert 2010, 563). The overall professional qualities of Russian low-level bureaucracy are poor, and a far cry from the Weberian ideal of rational governance (Gaman-Golutvina 2008, 42; Rowney and Huskey 2009a, 5; Huskey 2009, 232; Barabashev 2013, 45; Gel'man 2016; 2018). This is most evident in the matters of hiring and promotion. Officials are entwined in patronage networks, loyal to their immediate superiors instead of the organization, professional standards or an ideology (Huskey 2004, 35; Gimpel'son, Magun, and Brym 2009, 236–239). New employees are either already personally acquainted with their boss, or recommended by a close acquaintance (Gimpel'son, Magun, and Brym 2009, 233–237; Nikulin 2015, 246; Kurakin 2015, 304). Career prospects and promotions are seen as highly limited (Gimpel'son, Magun, and Brym 2009, 233–237; Kurakin 2015, 310–311). Short-term objectives and unlimited careerism prevail – gaining work experience and making contacts are what matters (Oleinik 2008, 175; Inkina 2019, 2).

Albeit relying on patronage networks and informal mechanisms regarding critical decisions, the decision-making elites still face a typical principal–agent problem (Easter 2008, 215): the need to oversee the performance of less-privileged members of officialdom. This is monitored and checked by using elements of the Weberian rational-legal order, along with informal signaling (Ledeneva 2013, 236). In terms of bureaucratic routines, such elements are manifested in the need to register and report on all the activities undertaken by the street-level bureaucrats. Ella Paneyakh holds that in Russia, the volume of the document flow has reached such heights that it weakens the efficiency of the functioning of organizations (Paneyakh 2011). She speaks of the "over-regulated state" (Paneyakh 2013), meaning the extreme control adopted in the public administration in Russia. Civil servants spend increasing amounts of their working time generating forma reports and meeting predetermined quotas.

For some governmental bodies in Russia, this has a brutal bearing. The police arrest people in order to meet the quotas so crucial to their performance evaluation, defining career prospects and financial bonuses (Paneyakh 2011, 43; 2014; Taylor 2014, 144–146). Judges, overloaded with work, are often dependent in their decisions on prosecution that ends up with a prosecutorial bias (Volkov et al. 2012, 46, 50; Paneyakh 2012). The quality of higher education has eroded under this bloated bureaucracy and hyper-regulation (Bliakher and Titaev 2013; Bliakher 2013), Anecdotal evidence indicates that the situation is similar in Russian health care (Paneyakh 2013, 80). The massive production of reports reduces the quality of work to formal and countable indicators. Low-level officials see completing the task on time (Oleinik 2008, 177) as central, regardless of quality (*otpiska* in Russian bureaucratic parlance).

Such reporting is designed to minimize discretion – to eliminate the risk of corruption. Anton Oleinik (2008) and Peter Solomon (2008) show how discretion is abused by various groups of

bureaucrats in non-symbolic policies. Paneyakh refines the picture of how discretion leads to different outcomes in different settings. Dense reporting leads the police to filter out "inconvenient" cases, in favor of those that are easy to process, to meet the quota on time (Paneyakh 2011, 44); further, judges are accorded "discretion under pressure": they choose punishments within "the range proposed by the law" (Paneyakh 2012, 112).

Neopatrimonial rule causes constant insecurity of the system. Agents cannot calculate the outcomes of their actions, which leads to further reproduction of insecurity (Erdmann and Engel 2007, 105). Such inherent insecurity is seen as a main trigger of the "cultural wars" starting in 2011–2012, with the Kremlin using ideological intensification to embellish its dysfunctionality (Robinson 2017). The policy process from elaboration and adoption to the implementation is vulnerable to arbitrariness on the part of the autocrat (whether a president, governor, or head of an organization's department) and ideological distortions. Massive unwritten rules must also be considered and dense quantitative reporting produced. Combined, these reduce the discretion needed for implementing a symbolic policy.

The Tolerance Policy in St Petersburg, the 2000s

As noted above, it was former deputy prime minister Valentina Matvienko, governor of St. Petersburg, who, had a personal interest in this concept and initiated the adoption of a policy of tolerance in St. Petersburg. Growing labor migration to the city and the rise of xenophobia and far-right terrorism, also at the federal level, spurred the adoption of the program (Sungurov and Boiarkov 2011; Achkasov and Rozanova 2013). Further, the murder, by a gang of far-right extremists, of a seven-year-old girl from a family of Tajikistani migrants tarnished the "European image of St. Petersburg," so important to Matvienko (Sungurov and Boiarkov 2011). Her personal preferences should not be underestimated. The title of "autocrat" applies to Matvienko, given how she came to power in St. Petersburg (G. M. Hahn 2004; J. W. Hahn 2004). After her predecessor was ousted through a series of intra-elite intrigues, she became Putin's envoy, with full control over the city. Sergei Markov, deputy head of the Committee on External Affairs (in charge of the tolerance policy), summarized in 2007: "Of course, life itself pushed us, a sharp surge of nationalism in St. Petersburg. And Valentina Ivanovna, who oversaw a similar project as deputy prime minister, made us hurry" (Ivanova and Kartashova 2007).

Organizational Grid

St. Petersburg had two budget programs for promoting tolerance: the 2006–2010 program for harmonizing interethnic and intercultural relations, preventing xenophobia, and promoting tolerance in St. Petersburg; and the 2011–2015 program aimed at harmonizing intercultural, interethnic, and interfaith relations and nurturing (*vospitanie*) tolerance in the city. The main policy goal in both programs was almost identically vague – to strengthen an environment of tolerance, based on the values of Russian multi-ethnic society. Both programs featured a strong textual commitment to human rights and freedoms, and to the culture of peace, and highlighted the importance of maintaining international standards of cultural diversity as set out by UNESCO.

Much effort went into organizing cultural events. The 2011 program envisaged specific measures: "Production and distribution of the educational cartoon 'World without violence,'"; "Organization of training courses for teachers … on the formation of attitudes of the tolerant consciousness and socio-cultural adaptation of migrants"; "Organization of the development of a series of museum educational programs aimed at illustrating the diversity of ethnic cultures"; "Preparation and holding of an annual film festival featuring films with anti-fascist content" (Pravitel'stvo Peterburga 2010). These events reflected the policy's core idea that behavior can be directed by symbols and narratives – that is, by images and words. The process was administered and overseen as would other policy. The city authorities established a special unit – the Department

of Coordination of State Programs in the Field of Interethnic Relations in St. Petersburg of the Committee on External Affairs (or, as I call it here for brevity and clarity, the Department of Tolerance Policy). However, its officials did not necessarily have relevant expertise and training. The department performed the important function of coordinating various bodies, including committees such labor and social policy, education, youth policies, and the like, all producing regular reports on implementation outcomes.

There was also a chain of state-run organizations to co-administer and maintain the program. In 2006, an expert council was created; it continued during the second program as well. The council involved scholars in the field of the humanities and social sciences, predominantly from St. Petersburg State University. The council's charge was to monitor the policy measures implemented and determine whether they worked toward achieving the goal of tolerance. Since 2004, there had been an advisory council on nationalities policy issues under the governor of St. Petersburg. Such councils were created in all regions of Russia at that time to consolidate representatives of civil society (the segment of ethnic and religious organizations) around the state (Berg-Nordlie, Holm-Hansen, and Kropp 2018, 22). The House of Nationalities provided organizational support (funding, office space) for officially recognized ethnic organizations (see note 3).

The activities of department employees were extensive. First, there was work carried out by the employees themselves. Officials had to produce reports about their work, organize events (if these were held inside a governmental building), attend events organized by third parties, write requests from higher authorities or respond to them. The second category involved monitoring activities performed by hired contractors, who published brochures, manuals, posters, developed and organized mass events, cultural festivals, trainings, and the like. Contractors had to meet the criteria set and offer the lowest bid to win the contract. Once a deal had been concluded, the relationship between the state body and the contractor was regulated by the *tekhzadanie* (working plan), made available online before the bidding.

The *tekhzadanie* was a design and a working schedule of tasks regulating public procurement. To avoid the risk of corruption and dishonest contractors, it was to be as detailed and precise as possible. The department staff had to formulate *tekhzadanie* themselves, based on available examples and drawing on their expertise. The *tekhzadanie* should specify various criteria: licensing requirements, work experience, and confirmation of the resources necessary to enable the work to be accomplished strictly according to the stipulated timetable.[6]

Officials lacked mechanisms for controlling contractors. If a contractor violated the terms of *tekhzadanie* or performed work poorly, an official could *threaten* to terminate the contract, but rarely did officials abrogate it, for doing so required a good deal of justifying evidence (which is time-consuming), and there was no guarantee that a new contractor would prove more capable. As a result, given the dense reporting on projects, street-level bureaucracies preferred to keep things running as they were.

The document flow forms the major part of an official's daily work. Instructions detail how to prepare an official paper, including the use of indentation, composition of the address, correct order of appearance of the names of officials in the document, and the like. Any bureaucratic document must be properly composed, approved, signed by the leadership (*visirovanie*), and registered in the chancery (*kantseliaria*) before it can be dispatched. Each document must indicate (in small typeface at the bottom of the page) the name and the telephone number of the executor and identify the actual author of the text and the person(s) obliged to ensure that the document is registered and delivered to the addressee. A document must also feature a detailed standardized header at the top of the page, showing exactly which organization it comes from.

The instructions used in St. Petersburg stipulate as follows: "The text of the document should be written correctly, clearly, understandably, and as briefly as possible. The text of the document should contain reliable and up-to-date information sufficient for making decisions or implementing them, and should not allow for different interpretations" (Pravitel'stvo Peterburga 2004). This standard applies to official letters, orders, and requests – not to policy memos or analytical papers.

The state agencies approached the tolerance policy with their accustomed instruments of examination, which had been devised mainly for material and substantial policies.[7] All activities were to be reported, with success determined quantitatively. What mattered for the evaluation of employee performance was numbers: the number of events organized within the policy framework; the number of people who attended these events; the number of media mentions; the number of teachers, journalists, and officials who were retrained; the number of brochures published; and so on (Prokhorenko 2009).[8] Data from a 2008 analytical report show a sharp increase in activities held in late autumn: it was essential to fill up the quotas by the end of the year (Pravitel'stvo Peterburga 2008). The program was used to close reports in other policy areas in the city, with the same events featured in reports by various committees. For example, the prevention of extremism or terrorism (important for law enforcement agencies) and advertising for social causes both used media campaigns conducted within the tolerance program (Poltavchenko 2012).

Officials themselves saw reporting as the key to efficiency and transparency of the state apparatus (Novikov 2015, 100–105). In the tolerance policy department, such reporting was deemed critical. One employee repeatedly noted, "we continuously [do nothing but] write reports – but what is to be done?" (field diary notes, September 27, 2013).

Measures Within the Policy

According to experts I interviewed At earlier stages of the policy, cooperation between the state and civil society was better. The general impression was that state officials were reluctant yet ready to collaborate with liberal experts and civil-society actors in the opportunities to conduct trainings and lectures for civil servants, the police, and employees of the migration units.

This interviewee recalls such encounters with officials of the Federal Migration Service (*Federal'naya migratsionnaia sluzhba*, or FMS):

> [T]he migration service needed it … they needed somehow to improve the skills of their employees, and the FMS employees were, in general, interested …They [the officials], for example, would say, "What is tolerance in our work? I come – they [labor migrants] are all squatting. They are making fun of me!" I say, "Why?" – "Well, they are squatting!" And I say, "Excuse me, but did you put benches there? For them to sit on?" "Well, no, they should be standing. They don't respect me, that is why they're squatting." I say, "Maybe they are squatting because they might have to wait for a long time" … There was quite a lot of stuff like this. (Polspb1203)

Cooperation with the police was also noted: "I would come to the head of … at that time it was possible to communicate … I communicated with the head, say, of the St. Petersburg branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs … They were more open; you could talk with them" (Polspb1203). Another expert involved in implementation recalls the same openness of various state service divisions (Polspb1303).

Language courses for migrants were perhaps the most tangible measure within the policy framework. There were attempts to conduct classes for children during the first program; by 2012, there were also courses for adults. However, according to Oksana Karpenko, these courses (from 2012 onward) were sporadic, poorly funded and held at times inconvenient for the participants (for example, during working hours). Moreover, courses were reported as implemented in certain years, whereas in practice they did not exist (Karpenko 2016, 165–168). Yet they were reported as successful by state authorities when they had to demonstrate progress in integration of labor migrants.

Also, nongovernmental organizations conducted activities. For example, the foundation Children of St. Petersburg, founded and led by Lika Frenkel, organized Russian-language classes for children from migrant families. Frenkel noted that her activities substituted for social state

services: "I am a Russian language teacher, I understand – I know how to teach Russian; I will do it. But I was made a social worker. In the city, social services do not work with migrants at all. In my view, that is a complete disaster" (as quoted in Koroleva 2012).

Policy-led practices for organizing Russian language courses for migrants ended in 2015: the local authorities explained that there were not enough migrants interested in attending classes. But the Children of St. Petersburg continued its work. Also, another nongovernmental organization, the PSP-Foundation (*blagotvoritel'nyi fond podderzhki I razvitiia prosvetitel'skikh i sotsial'nykh proektov*), provided language classes to labor migrants, but it was small, and its activities were limited.

Part of the tolerance program was taking children to museums in the city. This practice became one of the most visible and advertised activities within the tolerance policy in St. Petersburg (Smirnova 2012). The museums used this opportunity to receive funds from the state authorities: depending on the museum's profile, these excursions to museums offered as a means to "teach tolerance" in most cases were already part of their existing programs (Artemenko 2011).

Policy measures in this area were volatile. Nongovernmental organizations could probably implement this policy better than government agencies, as Lika Frenkel also argued. Some sporadic support was provided, but in general, the state was not inclined to cooperate with nongovernmental organizations, especially those of dubious political reliability. Despite the dominant new public management–based discourse about relegating state functions to nongovernmental organization, few privileged ones emerge as clients of the administration (Tarasenko 2015). These were mostly ethnic organizations coopted by the House of Nationalities or the Advisory Council. They understood the rules of the game and organized events that could be reported by officials.

Curtailing of Tolerance Programs

The policy changed after 2011–2012 (Achkasov and Rozanova 2013; Rozanova 2016) following the federal agenda. As a St. Petersburg policy elaborator noted, "In one of [Putin's] speeches, I think in 2011 or 2012,[9] the opposite assessment of tolerance appeared again from the head of our state. And then it began to disappear from the discourse" (Polspb1303). Putin's backlash against the term *tolerance* itself can be attributed to the broader conservative, or cultural, turn in Russia, prompting lower-ranking officials and politicians to change their attitudes. The Kremlin's profound shift in ideology is well researched (Lipman 2015, 112; Robinson 2017; Laruelle 2020a). The general trend was to juxtapose Russia as a unique civilization with "traditional values" against the generalized West encroaching on Russia (Horvath 2011; Lipman 2015; Laruelle 2020b).

The region has demonstrated its own dynamics. Structural alterations and closure of the tolerance program came when Georgii Poltavchenko became governor in 2011: "Valentina Ivanova left; a new governor appeared. Due to momentum, the program ran for one and a half years, and then it was closed … Valentina Ivanovna was a complicated person, but she was energetic, she was able to get other people to work. The current governor does not have these traits" (Polspb1303). This explanation is not reductionist or simplistic, but quite plausible. Andrei Starodubtsev (2014) has shown that structural opportunities and personal qualities, relevant social capital of regional leaders in Russia affect the outcome of policy initiatives in the regions.

Members of the regional legislature – *Zakonodatel'noe sobranie*, or ZAKS, criticized the program harshly (Sedeikiene 2012; BaltInfo 2012). Moreover, the head of the committee hosting the program declared that the policy was never to promote multiculturalism – it was a *kul'turtregerskaia* (from German *Kulturträger* – upholder of civilization or carrier of culture) (Karmunin 2012). The policy continued a few years more, due to institutional momentum.

The Department of Tolerance Policy was dissolved in 2014. The new committee on the nationalities and migration issues emerged, led by Oleg Makhno, a former general in the police

service. All programs were discontinued in 2015, and a new program designed to enhance "societal cohesion" was introduced – in line with the post-2012 trend of nationalities politics associated with the Kremlin's conservative turn and the symbolic construction of a unified Russian nation (Teper 2016; Blakkisrud 2016).

The tolerance program was institutionally precarious. It had been adopted without public deliberation or broader advocacy coalition, and was it subject to personalist and ideological oscillations. However, rules of routinized governance were also applied. It was a combination of these features that determined policy implementation at the street-level bureaucracy level.

Street-Level Bureaucracy Work Routines in the Department of Tolerance

Internal Events and Kartinka

Among the events envisaged by the tolerance program were regular meetings of the Expert Council, which included researchers who were to examine all major activities within the program. By design, if the street-level bureaucracy lacked the expertise to decide on policy measures, the Expert Council was to provide this.

The concept of *kartinka* derives from the staff's work in organizing a session of the Expert Council. To give an example from my field observations: The *upravlenie* (department) head, V., was visiting a department office and asked who would be attending the forthcoming session. The question was addressed to G., who enumerated the participants. At one point V. interrupted: "just the surnames [read aloud], please." G. complied and mentioned that S. and C. (heads of the social science departments at a major university) would not be coming. "What does that mean – not coming? Why?" V. asked. G. did not know what to answer. V. continued: "S. and C. are needed for the right image (*nuzhny dlia kartinki*); it is bad if they don't come" (field diary notes, September 23, 2013). Their not attending disconcerted V. because the council session was intended to demonstrate the unity between the state organization and mainstream academia, to impart scientific legitimacy to policy measures, presenting them as technocratic and depoliticized (Oleinik 2008, 179–180; Huskey 2014, 118; Novikov 2015, 102–105).

Because the council was regarded as a body that did not make decisions on merits, its activities were viewed by street-level bureaucrats as disrupting their own stressful work routines, endangering timely fulfillment of work plans. Department staff struggled to keep the council busy. Sessions of the Expert Council were replete with tasks quite remote from deliberations of policy measures, such as discussing already adopted federal legislation (Karpenko 2012). The agenda for the session was treated as follows: N. commented: "let them (experts) evaluate grant applications from ethnic organizations. After all, they are *experts* (*oni zhe experty*), let them give their *expert* opinions" (*pust' dadut svoiu ekspertnuiu otsenku*) (field diary notes, September 23, 2013). Rare critical assessments from council members caused negative reactions among the staff because they disrupted the smooth *kartinka*. As in the case of the police (Paneyakh 2011, 2014), street-level bureaucracies exhibited a certain discretion in sifting out complex cases to save time and resources.

When conducting this seemingly formal event, it was also necessary to maintain what was understood as "ideological correctness." N. discussed the distribution of grants on the phone. She said, "'Strategy'[10] should not be supported – you do not know what to expect from them. Tyva[11] should not be supported either, as it is nonsense to teach Russian citizens the Russian language 'for our money'" [she raised her voice, then laughed]. Further: they are not "ours," that is not from the House of Nationalities. "Let's support the Pushkinskaya squad, the Cossacks are now a big topic, it is relevant" (field diary notes, September 25, 2013). There were no formal prohibitions concerning the "strategy" nor any obligatory instructions to support the Cossacks. The key decisions were made behind the scenes, on grounds of procedural convenience and ideological trends.

An illustrative example of *kartinka* at work was a session of the Advisory Council (*konsul'ta-tivnyi sovet*), a body established to coordinate discussions of the authorities and ethnic and religious

organizations concerning tolerance policy in the city. In practice, their meetings served as a mechanism for mobilizing pro-governmental civil society and demonstrating the "unity" between state and society (Berg-Nordlie and Tkach 2016, 195; Myhre and Berg-Nordlie 2016). A session itself was a show with ethnic leaders of nongovernmental organizations reiterating the "discourse of harmony and calmness" (Berg-Nordlie and Tkach 2016, 185; Silaev 2020, 207–208).

What mattered for the street-level bureaucracy at the Department of Tolerance Policy were the number of sessions organized and ensuring that all major participants came. The latter task was much more important than it was for the Expert Council, since meetings of the Advisory Council were attended by the chairperson of the committee and sometimes even the relevant vice-governor. Therefore, the department not only sent out formal invitations to the board members but also made several rounds of calls to ensure that these people would come.

Considerable time was devoted to the seating arrangements – a performance based on tacit institutional knowledge. The attendees were to be spread around the meeting hall in such a way that all the bureaucrats from other committees would be located close to the presidium, which consisted of a deputy governor and the hosting committee's chair. The higher the rank of a representative, the closer to the presidium he or she was to be placed. But the committees themselves had to be placed based on their symbolic significance. For example, the Committee of Education ranked lower than the Committee of Finance; in case of competition for a closer seat, the Financial Committee would normally win – unless it was a question of a higher official, say, a chair or deputy chair, against the head of a unit from the Committee of Finance. This was deemed so important that the departmental head himself was the one who put the nameplates in place. There were no formal regulations for such a hierarchy: *intuition* ruled. Officials made decisions about seating arrangements, dictated by unwritten rules – not policy goals.

This procedure can be deduced from the general features of the bureaucratic corps described above. Given the dominance of patron–client relations in hiring and promoting, an ordinary official is crucially dependent on the goodwill of high-status figures (not necessarily immediate bosses). Such meetings serve as places for strengthening the social capital (Berg-Nordlie and Tkach 2016, 187–90). In case of material and more instrumental policies, employees can balance between informality and more palpable competence to bolster their work performance. However, with symbolic policies and measures, the instability of an individual official increases, and the informal system may assume grotesque forms.

Flow of Documents

The mode of dense reporting depicted by Paneyakh (2011) affects all governance in Russia, but the tolerance policy encountered additional complications. Against the bureaucratic practice of giving perfunctory replies (*otpiska*) as long as deadlines were met (Oleinik 2008, 177), department staff had to determine the addressee of a given letter, and employ the appropriate style of writing. One general rule applied to letters to committees (polite requests) and quite a different rule for letters sent down the hierarchy (more like orders). Composing a letter intended for the head of a major city museum and requesting that the museum premises be made available for a public event could take a week and a half – although everyone kept stressing the urgency of the matter. The departmental head insisted that a letter to such a person be written in a lofty manner, because "it is Ivanov [the head of the museum] himself" (field diary notes, September 23, 2013).

M. once asked me to write a "regular" letter on behalf of a committee head to one of the vice-governors: "You are writing a letter on behalf of Petrov [the committee head], so you must bear in mind the context: when a doctor of philological sciences, the chairperson of the Committee, writes a letter to a vice-governor, this requires a certain level of language, and we must write accordingly" (field diary notes, October 8, 2013).

The street-level bureaucracy tried to make a good impression, to accompany the real decisions made informally at the leadership level. The leadership normally settled all issues personally – face

to face, or on the phone (Ledeneva 2013, 159). The exaggerated concern shown by the street-level bureaucracy for the appearance of the letter can be explained by wanting to give the impression that the state unit is composed of technical professionals who are (also) aware of how to show proper respect. Lack of such respect might displease a high-ranking personage, in turn damaging the unit's reputation – and, more importantly, one's personal prospects.

Unwritten rules concerning hierarchies affected also the formal elements. What was known as the "page ruling" was important: the title of the addressee, depending on his or her position, must correspond to a certain line in the header of a letter, millimeter for millimeter. Once, when working on such a letter for an Advisory Council member, I violated this principle. Apparently, only a governor's name could be placed against the line "Government of the city" – committee heads names are not allowed to appear there. "Too much of honor," one of the employees explained (field diary notes, September 24, 2013).

Interacting with Contractors and Third Parties

When dealing with contractors and third parties, street-level bureaucracies faced the same problems, but they had less control over implementation. The best strategy was to select a counterpart who would understand rules of the game, but it was not always possible to make such a selection

The department was preparing seminars on the nationalities issues to be held for city journalists. Informally, employees discussed which journalists to contact. According to V., the candidate had to match the specifications in the *tekhzadanie* ("regularly publishing pieces in media outlets"), and then "the right words will be put in" (*a nuzhnie slova v nikh vlozhat*). N. suggested inviting the editor-in-chief of *Novaya Gazeta*, who was certain to attract journalists – which was a good thing, as having many attendees would contribute to a positive quantitative performance measurement, thus constructing *kartinka*. But V. disagreed: V. regularly listened to this person on the radio Echo Moskvy: he was "intelligent, but not politically correct" (*intelligentnyi, no ne politkorrektnii*) (see Huskey 2014, 121). Someone suggested the director of Transparency International, but a staff member explained that the organization had recently been branded a foreign agent (*inostrannii agent*). Thus, on the one hand, the employees understood the need to comply with the *tekhzadanie*, even if the potential candidate did not fully correspond to the requirements as to the "nationalities question." On the other hand, when discussing specific persons, the focus was on who would fit *politically* (field diary notes, October 2, 2013). Formally, there were no restrictions on inviting a foreign agent to lead an event (only a criminal record could be an obstacle), but the understanding of the current political climate indicated that state authorities should not be involved in cooperating with such an organization.

One contractor sent the scripts of the videos promoting the values of the tolerance policy. N. asked me to indicate the most appropriate one. I chose one where children were collecting cubes with the inscription "unity in diversity." N. said that this was no longer suitable: what was needed was a *St. Petersburg* identity ("we are all Petersburgers") (field diary notes, October 21, 2013). That seemed inconsistent, as the point about St. Petersburg (as well as all-Russian) identity had always been part of the policy – along with more general wording about "valuing diversity."

In rare cases, constraints detrimental to the policy process became evident to the broader public when implementation failed to deliver *kartinka*, causing a scandal. In 2012, the Department of Tolerance Policy published on its website a brochure, "*spravochnik trudovogo migranta*" (handbook for migrant workers), for labor migrants from Central Asia on "how to behave." The brochure noted various integration problems, with the migrants depicted as construction tools – palette knife, broom, roller – referring to professions occupied by those migrants, according to the public stereotype (figure 1). It included a set of recommendations on "what is not to be done." For example, one should *not* "always and everywhere wear ethnic clothing, as it attracts a lot of undesired attention." Moreover, "don't squat in the street" and "don't spit, or litter" (Aksanov 2012).

Figure 1. An exempt from the brochure for migrants (Vostok-Zapad 2011, 47).

The brochure had been developed by the public organization "*vzgliad v budushchee*" (look to the future) which aimed "at preventing HIV infection among young migrant workers" (Mogilevskaia 2012). The Danish National Evangelical Lutheran Church had funded the project; the Federal Migration Service assisted in developing the brochure, which was printed in Russian, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek languages (Levitina 2012). Its publication on the website caused a scandal in the media (Garmazhapova 2012), and major officials from the Committee of External Affairs were quick in their disavowal. They explained that the department's website presented topic-related third-party projects as well: the program's website "covers projects that are implemented without our participation, yet deserving attention" (Mogilevskaia 2012).

From these details, it is possible to reconstruct how such a brochure could appear on the website. Although the committee reiterated that the brochure in question was not implemented as part of the program, publishing it on the official website was part of the activities of the street-level bureaucracy. A staff member had to evaluate the material, assess how it corresponded with the goals of the policy, and then get approval from the head of the department for publication. But given all the policy problems described above, this was not always possible. For relevant expertise, one could turn to the Expert Council. As sociologist Oksana Karpenko publicly stated: "If I had been asked whether

the 'Handbook of Migrant Workers' should be issued as it is, I would have said definitely and decisively "no." But I didn't get a chance to say "no." Like many participants in this [public] discussion, I learned about the brochure from the media debates. In addition, on October 19, I participated in a meeting of the Expert Council on Strengthening Tolerance in St. Petersburg under the Committee on External Relations of St. Petersburg, where the draft of the federal Strategy for the State Nationalities Policy was discussed" (Karpenko 2012). Instead of discussing policy-related cases, council members often discussed peripheral issues. The brochure was approved for publication on the website through a decision of a street-level bureaucrat who lacked proper expertise and who was organizationally not motivated to confer with the Expert Council. As a result, *kartinka* crumbled, and the organization suffered loss of reputation.

Conclusion

From studying the workings of the Department of Tolerance Policy in St. Petersburg, I learned that tolerance policy was expressed in several budget programs aimed at combating extremism and xenophobia by "creating a tolerant environment" (Pravitel'stvo Peterburga 2010) and embedding the idea of tolerance in the national identity. In analyzing the policy – its purposes, its implementation, and its demise – I started from two theoretical premises. (1) The policy was *symbolic*: the state sought to *persuade* the populace to practice tolerance, rather than changing institutional arrangements. With symbolic policies, goals are vague and hard to measure, in turn dictating the need for greater discretion on the part of the immediate implementers (street-level bureaucracy). (2) The policy should be studied from the bottom and up: from the perspective of the street-level bureaucracy, whose discretion was central.

The specifics of Russian governance set the framework within which the street-level bureaucracy worked. Governance in Russia is neopatrimonial, combining informal and formal institutions, with a preponderance of the former. Unwritten rules, informal hierarchies, and behind-the-scenes agreements trump public deliberations and transparent instructions. The personal will of the autocrat (president, governor) determines the policy process through formal and informal signals (like speeches). However, formal mechanisms are used to monitor low levels of governance, who must produce large amounts of formal quantitative reporting.

With the tolerance policy in St Petersburg, difficulties typical of symbolic policies were aggravated by the shortcomings of Russian governance. Guidelines developed for quantifiable instrumental or material policies were ill-suited for the symbolic policy of tolerance. The policy was formulated and shaped as symbolic, but was intended for tackling problems that required more tangible, institutional solutions – for example, the issue of discrimination, which could be not solved by simply promoting a "tolerant environment" (Osipov 2010b). The policy might well have achieved more palpable results had it been isolated from the typical state administration or enjoyed greater personal interest on the part of the president – a combination important for a policy to succeed in today's Russia (Gel'man and Starodubtsev 2016). The Kremlin's other symbolic policies – towards pro-governmental youth patriotic clubs – are one example where minimal state interference in grassroots initiatives enabled smoother implementation (Laruelle 2015).

All this made implementation closed-looped. Discretion was skewed: in short supply where needed (when interacting with external actors and nongovernmental organizations), but abundant in a distorted form with secondary issues such as the document flow. Discretion became intuition in assessing how a formal action (an official meeting, the style of an official letter) would be perceived by an important figure in the hierarchy. The street-level bureaucracy used the coping technique of *kartinka* to smooth out the discrepancy between the inability to pursue the policy and the need to show progress, so crucial for personal career prospects. What mattered was the visibility of progress and scientific and societal legitimacy of events conducted within the policy. That is why I propose the *kartinka* metaphor rather than "Potemkin village" – to highlight the coercive aspect of the former: the latter would represent deliberate actions. The street-level bureaucracy had not planned

to build *kartinka*; it became necessary because of practices beyond their control. A similar situation will develop in any state institution in Russia associated with symbolic production subject to the combined vices of governance.

Scholars routinely emphasize that Russian state nationalities policy is locked into feigning productivity – whether due to the inertia of the bureaucracy and its intention to frame social issues as exclusively ethnic (Silaev 2020), sordid motives of ethnic entrepreneurs (Shabaev, Rozhkin, and Sadokhin 2014), or lingering Soviet-era legacies and "the folklorisation of politics" (Prina 2018). However, the festival-like nature of Russia's nationalities policy, with its overreliance on cultural activities among ethnic communities, can be explained through the combination of constraints and working conditions of the street-level bureaucracy. With such a policy, it is vital to have a pool of reliable actors who know and follow the rules of the game. The festivity became a convenient, neutral way to enable a report, downplaying ideological tensions. Thus, this policy area and its actors were forced to obey and to adapt to the predetermined conditions of policy implementation.

Notes

1 I use the term *policy* to refer to a set of measures aimed at spreading (ideas of) tolerance in society, regardless of how the actors themselves construed this concept.

2 Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Russian-language sources are my own.

3 House of Nationalities, or Houses of Friendship (of Peoples) are organizations established in certain Russian regions in the early 2000s to manage local ethnic communities. These houses, which are venues where ethnic dancers or music collectives perform, occupy office space, and the like, serve as a tool for keeping ethnic organizations under control and for demonstrating the unity of various ethnicities. In the public discourse, ethnic organizations monopolized the right to speak on behalf of ethnicities they represented (Prina 2016; Berg-Nordlie and Tkach 2016).

4 This fieldwork was conducted as a part of my graduate studies at the European University at St Petersburg.

5 The Russian regime is also framed as authoritarian, and it is debated whether neopatrimonialism equates with authoritarianism. Gero Erdmann and Ulf Engel (2007, 111–112) note that an authoritarian regime can rely upon legal-rational procedures, while democracy can utilize elements of neopatrimonial governance: but the difference between democracy and authoritarianism is that in the former, an (elected) "leader is subject to legal rules," whereas in the latter, the leader is not. add "there seems to be agreement that neopatrimonial rule belongs to the realm of authoritarian regimes" Erdmann and Engel (2007, 111). For the purposes of this article, such an analytical distinction is of minor significance. Hence, I treat the two concepts as interchangeable.

6 The rigidity of the *tekhzadanie* can result in travesty. A representative of the Jewish community of Krasnoyarsk explained in an interview that in order to grant financial support to the Jewish organization, the local authorities posted a bid for organizing the celebration of Hanukkah. However, the Jewish organization did not meet the formal criteria of the *tekhzadanie*, and the competition was "won" by the German cultural community, which then "hired" the Jewish organization as a subcontractor (diaskras2604 2018)

7 In Krasnodar, the authorities devised a mathematical formula of tolerance to measure policy outcomes (Adminstratsiia Krasnodarskogo kraia 2015).

8 When the federal nationalities policy further shifted toward symbolic nation building, the main indicator for success became the number of people who positively assessed interethnic relations and felt that they belonged to the Russian nation; these numbers were to be established by mass polls (Petrov, Lipman, and Hale 2014). Analysis of this criterion is beyond the scope of this article.

9 In a 2013 speech, Putin called tolerance "neutered and barren" (Putin 2013).

10 Local research center with liberal inclinations.

11 An ethnic nongovernmental organization.

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