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**Participatory Authoritarianism:
From Bureaucratic Transformation to Civic Participation in Russia and China**

Abstract: This article explores the way in which Russian and Chinese governments have rearticulated global trends towards active citizenship and participatory governance, and integrated them into pre-existing illiberal political traditions. The concept of ‘participatory authoritarianism’ is proposed in order to capture the resulting practices of local governance that, on the one hand enable citizens to engage directly with local officials in the policy process, but limit, direct and control civic participation on the other. The article explores the emergence of discourses of active citizenship at the national level and the accompanying legislative development of government-organised participatory mechanisms, demonstrating how the twin logics of openness and control, pluralism and monism, are built into their rationale and implementation. It argues that as state bureaucracies have integrated into international financial markets, so new participatory mechanisms have become more important for local governance as government agencies have lost the monopoly of information for effective policy-making. Practices of participatory authoritarianism enable governments to implement public sector reform while directing increased civic agency into non-threatening channels.

Keywords: Authoritarianism; participation; Russia; China; good governance; public sector reform

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This article explores the way in which internationally promoted norms of good governance, which involve expanding citizen participation in local policy processes, are put into practice by local governments in two non-democratic states: Russia and China. It identifies a set of practices, enacted by local officials through multiplying government-sanctioned participatory mechanisms at municipal, district and street levels, that, on the one hand, enable citizens to engage directly with local officials in policy processes, but limit and undermine civic participation on the other. I term this set of practices ‘participatory authoritarianism’. While my empirical focus considers the emergence of discourses of active citizenship and the legislative development of new government-organised participatory mechanisms in post-Soviet Russia and post-reform China, I hope to make two broader contributions to the study of authoritarian governance. First, I bring two hitherto discrete bodies of literature into conversation with one another, namely those on local governance by Russia specialists and those by China specialists, trace common trends in citizen participation and thereby draw out conclusions that apply in both cases. Second, I show how globally promoted, ostensibly democratic discourses and practices, such as participatory governance, are employed in order to maintain domestic non-democratic rule.¹

While both pre-reform China and Soviet-era Russia operated elaborate procedures for garnering citizens’ views on local policy issues, the adoption of market-oriented reforms in both states has facilitated the proliferation of new types of local government-approved participatory mechanisms that envisage a more active and autonomous role for citizens in local

¹ In the context of local governance, I refer to democratic practices as those that promote pluralism and authoritarian practices as those that stifle it, or promote monism. However, although participation suggests a growing plurality of voices in governance, my research shows that participatory practices are not always democratic, because these voices may be restricted or undermined. This is the contradiction at the heart of ‘participatory authoritarianism’.

governance.² However, this engagement occurs in an environment where more independent channels of participation are curtailed and regime-level democratisation is absent. In Russia, the space for electoral participation has narrowed following Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, and scholars increasingly classify the regime as 'authoritarian', rather than 'hybrid'.³ In China, while national elections have never occurred, analysts note increasingly repressive domestic governance under Xi Jinping.⁴ In what follows, I consider how these two non-democratic states recontextualise global trends towards greater participatory governance, arguing that the combination of a lack of independent feedback channels with a fragmenting and privatising state sector and increasingly educated, politically aware, middle-class citizenries means that non-democratic states must develop innovations that address the resultant knowledge gap in policy-making processes while managing and directing heightened civic energy.

The literature on nominally democratic institutions in non-democratic settings can be broadly divided into two camps: one that suggests such institutions have negligible democratising effects on the overall character of authoritarian regimes⁵ and one that suggests that their impact

² Catherine Owen and Eleanor Bindman, 'Civic Participation in a Hybrid Regime: Limited Pluralism in Policy-Making and Delivery in Contemporary Russia', *Government and Opposition* 54:1 (2019), pp. 98-120; Jane Duckett and Hua Wang, 'Extending Political Participation in China: New Opportunities for Citizens in the Policy Process', *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 6:3 (2013), pp. 263-276; Oscar Almén, 'Participatory Innovations Under Authoritarianism: Accountability and Responsiveness in Hangzhou's Social Assessment of Government Performance', *Journal of Contemporary China* 27: 110 (2018), pp. 165-179.

³ Vladimir Gel'man, *Authoritarian Russia: Analyzing Post-Soviet Regime Changes* (Pittsburgh, MA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015); Graeme Gill, *Building an Authoritarian Polity: Russia in Post-Soviet Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁴ George Yin, 'Domestic repression and international aggression? Why Xi is uninterested in diversionary conflict', Brookings Institute, 22 January 2019. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/domestic-repression-and-international-aggression-why-xi-is-uninterested-in-diversionary-conflict/>.

⁵ Stanislav Markus, 'Capitalists of All Russia, Unite! Business Mobilization under Debilitated Dirigisme', *Polity* 39:3 (2007), pp. 277-304; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Prezworski, 'Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats', *Comparative Political Studies* 40:11 (2007), pp. 1279-1301; Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

requires us to reclassify regimes as ‘hybrid’.⁶ However, the bulk of both strands focus on national-level institutions and processes – parliaments, legislatures and elections. Research on participatory institutions at the local level less explicitly engage with questions of regime type, but their conclusions tend to confirm the first view: local participatory mechanisms contribute to national regime stability by enabling governments to access citizens’ views on local issues, vital for effective policy-making (and hence for minimising discontent),⁷ and channelling growing middle-class political consciousness into approved, non-threatening fora, reducing the risk of unmanageable civic activism.⁸ They also enable governments to demonstrate adherence to globally promoted trends of civic engagement and good governance, challenging accusations of authoritarian rule from both domestic and international critics. Thus, the existence of participatory mechanisms should not be taken as *prima facie* evidence that an authoritarian regime is shifting towards hybridity or democracy and explains why non-democratic leaders are keen to promote local civic participation. While the research presented below supports these conclusions, the present article is less concerned with exploring the effects of local institutions on national regime type, and more with tracing the ways in which non-democratic leaders promote and manage the new forms of active citizenship produced through state transformation. Below, I seek to demonstrate the shift in relationship between government and citizen in

⁶ Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Matthijs Bogaards, ‘How to Classify Hybrid Regimes? Defective Democracy and Electoral Authoritarianism’, *Democratization* 16:2 (2009), pp. 399-423; Henry Halee, ‘Hybrid Regimes’ in *The Dynamics of Democratization: Dictatorship, Development, and Diffusion*, edited by Nathan J. Brown, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), pp. 23-45; Leah Gilbert and Payam Mohseni, ‘Beyond Authoritarianism: The Conceptualization of Hybrid Regimes’, *Studies in Comparative International Development* 46:3 (2011), pp. 270–297. Andreas Schedler (2013) *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 78-82.

⁷ Martin Dimitrov, ‘What the Party Wanted to Know: Citizen Complaints as a “Barometer of Public Opinion” in Communist Bulgaria’, *East European Politics and Societies* 28 (2014), pp. 271-295; Laura Luehrmann, ‘Facing Citizen Complaints in China, 1951—1996’, *Asian Survey* 43:5 (2003), pp. 845-866; Rory Truex, *Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁸ Mary Gallagher, “‘Reform and Openness’: Why China's Economic Reforms Have Delayed Democracy”, *World Politics* 54:2 (2002), p. 372; Catherine Owen, “‘Consentful contention’ in a Corporate State: Human Rights Activists and Public Monitoring Commissions in Russia”, *East European Politics*, 31:3 (2015), pp. 274-293.

authoritarian-regulatory states with evidence from state discourse, legislation and interview data.

Scholars of China have long noted local participatory developments within broader authoritarian conditions, and have produced numerous useful conceptualisations.⁹ These include ‘populist authoritarianism’, which captures the combination of high support for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with high levels of political protest¹⁰; ‘authoritarian deliberation’, which conceptualises the proliferation of consultative mechanisms in China’s non-democratic polity¹¹; ‘consultative authoritarianism’, which explores China’s increasingly active yet controlled civil society groups¹²; and ‘authoritarian responsiveness’, which considers whether state officials implement societal demands.¹³ Why has there been a dearth of attempts to conceptualise this development in the case of Russia? Many scholars of Russian politics appeared blinkered by the legacy of the transition paradigm, which assumed that countries emerging from the USSR were set upon an inevitable trajectory of democratisation.¹⁴ Hence, studies tended to focus on whether the institutions of liberal democracy such as civil society are shifting towards consolidation or co-optation,¹⁵ which, while certainly worthy of scholarly

⁹ The first major study was Tianjian Shi, *Political Participation in Beijing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

¹⁰ Wenfang Tang, *Populist Authoritarianism: Chinese Political Culture and Regime Sustainability* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016). For more on protest as a feedback mechanism see Peter Lorentzen, ‘Regularizing Rioting: Permitting Public Protest in an Authoritarian Regime’, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 8 (2013), pp. 127-158; Chen Xi, *Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Jidong Chen Jennifer Pan and Yiqing Xu, ‘Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness: A Field Experiment in China’, *American Journal of Political Science* 60:2 (2016), pp. 383-400.

¹¹ Baogang He and Mark Warren, ‘Authoritarian Deliberation: The Deliberative Turn in Chinese Political Development’, *Perspectives on Politics* 9:2 (2011), pp. 269-289.

¹² Jessica Teets, *Civil Society under Authoritarianism: The China Model* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹³ Chen *et al.*, ‘Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness’.

¹⁴ See Thomas Carothers, ‘The End of the Transition Paradigm’, *Journal of Democracy* 13:1 (2002), pp. 5-21.

¹⁵ See Marc Morjé Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Debra Javeline and Sarah Lindemann-Komarova, ‘A Balanced Assessment of Russian Civil Society’, *Journal of International Affairs* 63:2 (2010), pp. 171-188; Elena Chebankova, *Civil Society in Putin’s Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Leah Gilbert, ‘Crowding Out Civil Society: State Management of

endeavour, has obscured the emergence of other institutional innovations not captured by a democratisation framework.¹⁶ While some studies of China adopted the transition framework, they are far fewer than in the Russian case.

The present article aims to redress this imbalance by developing a concept and small typology of associated practices of managing growing levels of civic participation in local governance, which appear in both states – and perhaps beyond. Hence, I choose the broader term ‘participatory’, which captures the range of modes of citizen engagement from consultation and deliberation to delegation and co-production.¹⁷ While the China scholars discussed above have researched participation as a strategy of domestic regime survival, I highlight the significance of global trends in bringing about, shaping and mediating these strategies and their intertwining with local non-democratic traditions of government. Current literature has tended to assume that democratic norms promoted by international actors have a democratising influence on domestic regimes; I argue that the opposite is often the case.¹⁸ In Russia and China, practices of managed participation constitute local, non-democratic manifestations of global good governance trends.

The comparative study of political processes in Russia and China is a small but growing field.¹⁹

I seek to contribute to this field from an interpretive perspective, which departs from traditional

Social Organisations in Putin’s Russia’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 68:9 (2016): pp. 1553-1578; Yulia Skokova, Ulla Pape and Irina Krasnopolskaya, ‘The Non-profit Sector in Today’s Russia: Between Confrontation and Co-optation’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 70:4 (2018), pp. 531-563.

¹⁶ Important exceptions include Richard Sakwa, *The Crisis of Russian Democracy: The Dual State, Factionalism and the Medvedev Secession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); James Richter, ‘Putin and the Public Chamber’, *Post-Soviet Affairs* 25:1 (2009), pp. 39–65.

¹⁷ Shelley Arnstein, ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’, *Journal of American Planning Association* 35:4 (1969), pp. 216-224.

¹⁸ See Oisín Tansey, *The International Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 26-29, for a review of this literature.

¹⁹ Tomas Larsson, ‘Reform, corruption, and growth: Why corruption is more devastating in Russia than in China’, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39:2 (2006), pp. 265-281; Linda Cook and Martin K.

approaches based on ‘controlled comparison’, that involve ‘*either* contrasting outcomes despite similar potentially explanatory characteristics *or* similar outcomes despite contrasting potentially explanatory characteristics’ [emphasis in original].²⁰ As Simmons and Smith have argued, such an approach can over-emphasize the ability to control in comparative research designs in the social sciences and de-emphasise context and the importance of local meanings in the construction of the political.²¹ Instead, I follow the approach to comparison that Skocpol and Somers have termed ‘parallel demonstration of theory’. Here, ‘the point of the comparison is to assert a similarity among the cases – similarity, that is, in terms of the common applicability of the overall theoretical arguments.’²² For such an approach to be convincing and rigorous – and to avoid accusations of cherry-picking facts – in-depth knowledge of each case must be acquired, and comparison must start from ‘the [researcher’s] ability to make sense of the singularities of each system, rather than from the capacity either to slot them into predetermined boxes or place them on a continuum.’²³ An interpretively oriented parallel demonstration of theory should seek to uncover locally situated meanings from which similarities across both cases can be highlighted and interpreted through the proposed theoretical framework.

Dimitrov, ‘The Social Contract Revisited: Evidence from Communist and State Capitalist Economies’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 69:1 (2017), pp. 8-26; Martin Krzywdzinski, *Consent and Control in the Authoritarian Workplace: Russia and China Compared* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Ian McAllister and Stephen White, ‘Economic Change and Public Support for Democracy in China and Russia’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 69:1 (2017), pp. 76-91; Alexander Libman and Michael Rochlitz, *Federalism in China and Russia: Story of Success and Story of Failure?* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019).

²⁰ Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith, ‘Comparison with an Ethnographic Sensibility’, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 50:1 (2017), p. 127.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, ‘The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22:2 (1980), pp. 176-177.

²³ Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 63. See also Dvora Yanow, ‘Interpretive Analysis and Comparative Research’ in Isabelle Engeli and Christine Rothmayr Allison (eds.) *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

From this perspective, Russia and China are pertinent comparative cases for a theoretical elaboration of the relationship between bureaucratic transformation and citizen participation as they share two important similarities. First, both developed extensive state socialist bureaucracies, meaning that the introduction of market principles required a transformation of the relationship between citizens and government, from one based on universal entitlement to one based on individual need. This suggests that both governments' domestic rhetoric are likely to share the goal of legitimating this transformation. Second, both states are largely non-democratic at the national level (with no opportunities to elect leaders in China and limited opportunities in Russia) and freedoms of assembly and expression are curtailed. While my analysis seeks to maintain an appreciation of the unique political culture of each state – indeed, citizens' experience of social control by the state in Russia and China differ enormously and is discussed below – my proposition or, following John Boswell and colleagues, my 'plausible conjecture', is that the common governance problems inherent in the process of bureaucratic transformation of non-democratic states are also inspiring local solutions with similarities.²⁴ These solutions seek to recruit citizens into the governing process but simultaneously limit and undermine their impact. In order to demonstrate this, I produce a small typology of practices that appear in both cases, which constitute participatory authoritarianism. The typology consists of, first, extending participatory opportunities while restricting who can participate and, second, engaging citizens in decision-making processes but undermining or distorting their input. This helps us understand how local non-democratic leaders manage citizens' involvement in local political processes as authoritarian government shifts towards governance.

²⁴ John Boswell and colleagues argue that the purpose of interpretive comparison is to form 'plausible conjectures' that 'may or may not resonate beyond the immediate context in which they are initially developed'. See John Boswell, Jack Corbett and R. A. W. Rhodes, *The Art and Craft of Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 43.

Comparative interpretive analysis is relatively rare, partly because of the difficulties in developing sufficient levels of ethnographic sensibility in more than one highly complex polity.²⁵ I have sought to address this by spending more than two years living, working and conducting fieldwork in each country. Hence, the present article is based over 100 research interviews conducted during this time with local scholars, current and former members of local participatory bodies, as well as local officials in Russia and China. In Russia, my fieldwork has focussed on corporate deliberative and advisory bodies developed since 2005, such as public chambers (*obchestvennye palaty*) and public councils (*obshchestvennye sovety*), and, more recently, participatory budgeting initiatives (*initsiativnoye byudzhetrovaniye*).²⁶ In China, my fieldwork has explored residents' committees (*juweihui*), civic organisations aimed at enhancing participatory governance, and participatory budgeting initiatives (*canyu shi yusuan*). In both countries, I have conducted formal interviews and informal conversations with scholars working on participatory governance. While I do not cite all interviews in the present text, they inform my broader analysis and overall argumentation.

This ethnographic orientation is supported by critical discourse analysis (CDA) of texts and speeches by political leaders, as well as relevant legal documents. On the Russian side, I accessed 10 annual Presidential Addresses to the Federal Assembly between 2008 and 2019, and Vladimir Putin's seven pre-election articles outlining his domestic and foreign policy agendas prior to the March 2012 Presidential elections. The Presidential Address has been made annually since the adoption of the 1993 Constitution and is considered to deal with the 'state of the nation'; the pre-election articles were published in some of the country's most

²⁵ Yanow, 'Interpretive Analysis and Comparative Research', p. 148. For a definition of 'ethnographic sensibility', see Edward Schatz (ed.) *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 5.

²⁶ These are composed partly of civic activists and partly of local government officials, which aim to mediate between different sections of society and promote civic harmony. See Richter, 'Putin and the Public Chamber'.

respected broadsheets and were discussed extensively both in Russia and beyond. On the Chinese side, I accessed the programmatic speeches by Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and, latterly, Xi Jinping, to the five-yearly National Party Congress (2002, 2007, 2013 and 2017), and two collections of Xi Jinping's writings that now form Xi Jinping Thought.²⁷ In the article's second section, I examine how each leader constructs processes of change, how they describe the role of the citizen in governance and the institutions envisaged to inculcate this new role, and the legitimating narratives for the new relationship between citizens and the authorities. CDA complements my practice-based understanding of governance by emphasising the dialectical relationship between discursive change and the evolution of practices, and highlights how various types of practices may fuse together over time, as discourses are weaved together by political leaders to form legitimating narratives for these new practices.²⁸ I suggest this is what has occurred with democratic practices of participation and authoritarian practices of control in the field of local governance in Russia and China.

The essay comprises three sections. First, I set out the theoretical foundations of 'participatory authoritarianism' and delineate the typology of its constitutive practices. I suggest that the oppositional yet mutually reinforcing logics of openness and control found in these practices are essential for local governance in an era of late capitalism. Second, I explore Russian and Chinese governmental rhetoric on civic participation, arguing that the market transformation of state bureaucracy without the political transformation of government has required leaders to produce new vocabularies and narratives for the proliferating mechanisms of participatory governance in both states. Third, I trace the twin logics producing participatory authoritarianism in the legislation on local self-government in Russia and China, and illustrate

²⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2014); Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, Volume 2, (Shanghai: Shanghai Press, 2018).

²⁸ Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), p. 24.

the typology of practices set out in the first section with evidence from my interviews. While some of these discussions may be familiar to scholars with expertise in one of the two countries, the article's innovation lies in two areas. First, it draws these conclusions across both cases, demonstrating that the marketisation of bureaucracies presents a set of common challenges for non-democratic leaders that are being addressed through a common set of practices. And, second, it demonstrates how international norms of 'good governance' can be applied locally for quite different ends.

Practices of Participatory Authoritarianism in the Era of Late Capitalism

This section builds on the nascent body of work that takes a practice-based approach to the study of authoritarianism.²⁹ Schatzki defines a practice as 'a set of doings and sayings organized by a pool of understandings, a set of rules.'³⁰ Exploring practices of governance enables the researcher to explore the formation of political subjecthood through language, signs and discourse, accessing this subject through the 'sets of patterned actions' he/she engages in.³¹ When applied to authoritarianism, it shifts the focus away from national regime type by suggesting that authoritarian practices exist within liberal democracies – and, by extension, that democratic practices may exist in one-party states – and aids an understanding of how various 'patterns of action' reinforce or undermine political stability.

²⁹ Marlies Glasius, 'What Authoritarianism is... And is Not: A Practice Perspective', *International Affairs* 94:3 (2018), pp. 515-533; Marlies Glasius, 'Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices: a Framework', *Globalizations* 15:2 (2017), pp. 179-197; Ben Wagner, 'Understanding Internet Shutdowns: A Case Study from Pakistan', *International Journal of Communication* 12:1 (2018), pp. 3917-3938.

³⁰ Theodore Schatzki, 'Practice Mind-ed Orders' in Theodore Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike von Savigny, eds., *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 53.

³¹ Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, 'International Practices', *International Theory* 3:1 (2011), p. 5.

Glasius argues that ‘authoritarian practices presuppose a downward relationship, where the political actor engaged in them has control over the people affected.’³² While the practices discussed below do presuppose such a relationship, they simultaneously presume an inclusive, pluralistic relationship. I seek to capture this Janus-faced nature of local governance in Russia and China by defining participatory authoritarianism as *a set of practices by local governments in non-democratic states undergoing processes of bureaucratic marketisation that establishes avenues for citizens to engage voluntarily in policy processes, while simultaneously deliberately limiting, controlling or undermining the extent and impact of this engagement.* These practices occur at the level of process and at the level of outcome and hence take two forms: first, widening citizens’ participation in policy processes, while either vetting potential participants to ensure access only to compliant individuals or ejecting participants during the event for airing inappropriate opinions; and second, conducting a participatory event, but deemphasising its results by privately making the relevant decisions beforehand or drastically watering down any transformative potential in the follow-up legislation. These two practices, illustrated in the third section, occur in an institutional setting (what Schatzki termed ‘pool of understandings’) in which civic participation is simultaneously encouraged and promoted – often as a panacea for the state’s many problems – but, rather than inviting citizens to help shape the agenda, conceives their role primarily as assisting local authorities in the execution of centrally determined tasks.

Participatory practices have existed in authoritarian states long before the implementation of market reforms. In China, the Maoist concept of the ‘mass line’, which refers to ‘a close and direct relationship between the Party and the masses’, enables citizens to interact with local

³² Glasius, ‘What Authoritarianism is... And is Not’, p. 527.

officials who are obliged to respond to complaints and resolve disputes in a timely fashion.³³ Mass line ideology has been invoked by scholars to interpret China's participatory mechanisms since Mao, which range from evaluating draft legislation and writing letters to officials³⁴ to the high levels of protest since 1990s.³⁵ In the late Soviet period, officials gathered public opinion by analysing complaint letters and conducting opinion polls³⁶ and 'citizen inspectors' played monitoring roles during policy implementation.³⁷ Hahn has concluded that 'the image of Soviet citizens as passive recipients of government policies and stoic and uncomplaining subjects lacking legitimate opportunities or the inclination to contest and shape the decisions that affect their lives is inaccurate, at least at the local level'.³⁸ Hence, the idea advanced below is not that participation under authoritarianism is a new phenomenon, but that *the nature of participation under authoritarianism is changing* as domestic state functions shift away from direct service provision and towards regulation. Feedback mechanisms that have not grown out of bureaucratic transformations remain in both Russia and China, and continue to reproduce traditional state-society dynamics, which assume a citizenry dependent on the state for welfare and are embodied in practices such as petitioning, polling and complaint-making.³⁹ But mechanisms are emerging that seek to inculcate new forms of active citizenship, whereby citizens voluntarily provide knowledge and expertise to local officials, such as participatory

³³ Tang, 'Populist Authoritarianism', p. 6.

³⁴ James Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), p. 80.

³⁵ Xi, *Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China*, p. 14.

³⁶ Martin Dimitrov, 'Tracking Public Opinion under Authoritarianism', *Russian History* 41:3 (2014), pp. 329-353.

³⁷ Jan Adams, *Citizen Inspectors in the Soviet Union: The People's Control Committee* (New York: Praeger, 1977).

³⁸ Jeffrey Hahn, *Soviet Grassroots: Citizen Participation in Local Soviet Government*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 262.

³⁹ Putin's annual 'direct line' and China's 'Mayors Mailbox' are examples of mechanisms that reproduce traditional state-society relations. Similarly, scholars note the role of complaint-making as a form of feedback in both countries (see Laura Henry, 'Complaint-making as Political Participation in Contemporary Russia', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45:3-4 (2012), pp. 243-254; Luehrmann, 'Facing Citizen Complaints in China'). However, these mechanisms predate market transformations and do not seek to cultivate 'active citizens' of the type described below, hence I do not explore them here.

budgeting, participatory pricing and new deliberative fora, but simultaneously limit their capacity to effect change. I now consider this proposition in more detail.

In democracies and non-democracies, participatory mechanisms have become more important following the adoption of market principles into state bureaucracies. Beginning in the UK, USA and New Zealand during the late 1970s and early 1980s, national governments around the world have introduced principles drawn from the private sector into domestic public sectors in an ensemble of norms known as New Public Management (NPM). These include the privatisation of state-owned assets, devolution of executive power to the provincial or municipal levels, outsourcing of government functions to businesses and charitable organisations, and monetisation and means-testing of welfare.⁴⁰ The result has been a government-driven departure from the so-called ‘command and control’ states of the twentieth Century, which provided welfare directly to citizens, and towards types of regulatory states, which engage instead in ‘arms’ length governance’ through fragmented, decentralised and internationalised agencies.⁴¹ In regulatory states, governments are no longer the primary source of the knowledge and resources required for the effective policy-making and delivery; consequently, they must establish mechanisms that allow them to access this knowledge and resources in order to manage and oversee the policy process. Citizens are encouraged to become active in local governance since the state is no longer considered capable of fulfilling the task of welfare and service provision alone.⁴² Institutions of what Keane has termed

⁴⁰ Giandomenico Majone, ‘From the Positive to the Regulatory State: Causes and Consequences of Changes in the Mode of Governance’, *Journal of Public Policy* 17:2 (1997), pp.139-167. See also Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 23; Norman Flynn, *Public Sector Management*, 5th Edition, (London: Sage, 2007), p. 204.

⁴¹ Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones, ‘Global Governance as State Transformation’, *Political Studies*, 64:4 (2016), p. 795. For how these transformations are occurring beyond the West, see Navroz Dubash and Bronwen Morgan (eds.), *The Rise of the Regulatory State of the South: Infrastructure and Development in Emerging Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁴² Eric Swyngedouw, ‘Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-Beyond-the-State’, *Urban Studies* 42:11 (2005), pp. 1991-2006; Jon Pierre, Jon and B. Guy Peters, *Governance, Politics and the State*, (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 2000).

‘monitory democracy’ have sprung up alongside elections to extend citizen input into ever wider spheres of state power.⁴³ In non-democratic regulatory states, consultative, deliberative and other types of participatory mechanisms are all the more important in light of the absence or malfunctioning of other feedback channels.

This process of marketisation has fundamentally changed in the way in which governments around the world conceive of the role of citizens in the governing process, affecting the design of participatory institutions and how they are represented to citizens in public discourse. In regulatory states, citizen ‘consumers’ of government services must be able to make rational and informed choices about their needs, and their preferences must be accessed by policy-makers to ensure services are developed to meet those needs.⁴⁴ Further, since the fragmentation and decentralisation of formerly centralised state agencies have resulted in private businesses and third sector organisations delivering frontline services, the inclusion of citizens and non-state service providers into policy processes has become an important means for policy-makers to garner requisite knowledge.⁴⁵ In short, the role of the citizen in society is transforming as the role of the state shifts away from direct service provision and towards regulation. This new active citizen should be a flexible, resilient, entrepreneurial consumer of public services, able to make informed choices about the services she and her family need.⁴⁶ The task of local governments then becomes the production and curation of this form of citizenship, which is blended with pre-existing norms and traditions of political culture. One of the ways in which this occurs is through practices of participatory authoritarianism.

⁴³ John Keane, *The Life and Death of Democracy* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2009).

⁴⁴ John Clarke, Janet Newman, Nick Smith, Elizabeth Vidler and Louise Westmarland, *Creating Citizen Consumers: Changing Public and Changing Public Services*, (London: Sage, 2007).

⁴⁵ Frank Vibert, *The Rise of the Unelected: Democracy and the New Separation of Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); John Keane, *Power and Humility: The Future of Monitory Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2018).

⁴⁶ Wendy Brown, ‘Sacrificial Citizenship: Neoliberalism, Human Capital and Identity Politics’, *Constellations* 23:1 (2016), pp. 3-14; Aihwa Ong, ‘Mutations in Citizenship’, *Theory, Culture and Society* 23:2-3 (2006), pp. 499-505.

In their seminal 1963 work, Almond and Verba argued that the kind of citizen required in a democracy was an ‘allegiant’ one, ‘oriented positively to the input structures and the input process’.⁴⁷ By contrast, in authoritarian states, ‘it is essentially a passive relationship’.⁴⁸ Fifty years later, in a reassessment of Almond and Verba’s study, Welzel and Dalton argue that global political culture is shifting towards a more empowered, ‘assertive’ citizen who voices concerns and is critical of her government. They write, ‘In contrast to the allegiant citizen of the past, contemporary publics more often combine a deep normative commitment to democratic ideals with dissatisfaction on how governments fulfil these ideals’. Even in non-democratic states, they observe this trend: ‘These patterns are most evident in mature, post-industrial democracies but are also emerging in the political cultures of those developing nations in which living conditions are rapidly improving’.⁴⁹ Manifestations of this trend can be observed in Russia and China’s changing social strata.

I conclude this discussion by highlighting two important ways in which the concept of participatory authoritarianism enhances our understanding of local governance in Russia and China. First, it contributes to a practice-based understanding of citizenship in contemporary non-democratic contexts – a concept whose notions of rights and responsibilities has led to its neglect in studies of authoritarianism.⁵⁰ Uncovering practices of participatory authoritarianism can reveal how local governments develop controlled forms of active citizenship, which

⁴⁷ Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (London: Sage, 1989 [1963]), p. 30.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁹ Russell Dalton and Christian Welzel, *Civic Culture Transformed: From Allegiant to Assertive Citizens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 287.

⁵⁰ This gap was highlighted by Greg Distelhorst and Diana Fu, ‘Performing Authoritarian Citizenship: Public Transcripts in China’, *Perspectives on Politics* 17:1 (2019), pp.106-121.

enables effective policy-making, contributes to stable domestic governance and adheres to international norms.

Secondly, participatory authoritarianism posits a more theoretically nuanced account of the relationship between democratic practices of openness and accountability and authoritarian practices of control and arbitrariness. Rather than a simple ‘corruption’ or ‘distortion’ of democratic norms and practices, participatory authoritarianism highlights their intertwined and co-constitutive nature. It conceives of local democratic and authoritarian practices as coexisting in an on-going dialogical relationship with one another, each being implemented in response to the situation created by the implementation of the other.⁵¹ In contrast to the process inherent within Hegelian dialectics, a dialogical process does not presume a resolution or synthesis – there is no ultimate attainment of (or transition to) a final ideal state. Instead, a dialogical relationship sees democratic and authoritarian logics co-existing simultaneously, constantly interacting and evolving in response to one another, and producing sets of practices that reflect and embody these dynamics as they change over time. In this way, it inverts the Foucauldian insight that liberal-democratic governance is parasitic upon authoritarian practices by suggesting that contemporary authoritarian governance similarly requires democratic practices in order to produce the required political subjectivities.⁵² It also is distinct from conceptions of hybridity since no novel ‘third space’ is attained: the two components remain discrete analytical elements.⁵³ As Pieterse observed, critics of hybridity argue that it is ‘meaningful only as a critique of essentialism.’⁵⁴ While this critique has been well made in Cultural Studies,⁵⁵ it has

⁵¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Austin Press, 1981).

⁵² Barry Hindess, ‘The Liberal Government of Unfreedom’, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26:2 (2001), p. 104; Trent Hamann ‘Neoliberalism, Governmentality and Ethics’, *Foucault Studies* 6:42 (2009), pp. 37-59.

⁵³ Homi K. Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 54-55.

⁵⁴ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, ‘Hybridity... So What? The Anti-Hybridity Backlash and the Riddles of Recognition’, *Theory, Culture and Society* 18: 2-3 (2001) p. 222.

⁵⁵ See Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995).

not yet penetrated studies of political regimes, where boundary fetishism remains a methodological imperative. But what the rigorous reinforcement of boundaries in the study of democracy and authoritarianism misses is an appreciation of how these two sets of practices operate alongside one another, sustaining and reinforcing one another. The remaining sections show how internationally promoted democratic norms intertwine with domestic authoritarian logics both at the level of state discourse and at the level of local legislation in contemporary Russia and China to produce practices of participatory authoritarianism.

Good Governance and Participatory Authoritarianism in Russia and China

Numerous scholars note the globally embedded nature of domestic bureaucratic transformations.⁵⁶ Jayasuria argues that the essential context for domestic institutional change lies within ‘systems of transnational markets and rule-making’.⁵⁷ And, following Soviet collapse in Russia and the instigation of China’s reform period under Deng Xiaoping, leaders began to engage with Western economists and policy advisors, and integrating into various intergovernmental bodies that promote governance reform.⁵⁸ Thus, both leaderships were encouraged and, sometimes, required to reflect on and implement recommendations for transforming governance structures. This section highlights Russian and Chinese interactions with international institutions promoting good governance and active citizenship during their respective periods of domestic reform, and explores how these norms have been represented in government discourses. Here, I utilise CDA, which reveals how discourse sustains relations of

⁵⁶ Witold Henisz, Bennet Zelner and Mauro Guillén, ‘The Worldwide Diffusion of Market-Oriented Infrastructure Reform, 1977-1999’, *American Sociological Review* 70:6 (2005), pp. 871-897; Jacint Jordana, David Levi-Faur and Xavier Fernández-i-Marín, ‘The Global Diffusion of Regulatory Agencies; Channels of Transfer and Stages of Diffusion’, *Comparative Political Studies* 44:10 (2011), pp. 1343-1369.

⁵⁷ Kanishka Jayasuriya, ‘Regulatory State with Dirigiste Characteristics: Variegated Pathways of Regulatory Governance’ in Dubash and Morgan, *The Rise of the Regulatory State of the South*, p. 185.

⁵⁸ Julian Gewirtz, *Unlikely Partners: Chinese Reformers, Western Economists and the Making of Global China* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002).

power and domination, to analyse the relationship between economic reform, democracy and the citizen articulated the speeches and written texts by the Russian and Chinese leadership.⁵⁹ The analysis shows that while both consider it important and necessary to open their bureaucracies to the market and enhance the role of the citizen in local governance, a similar opening of domestic political systems is considered a separate and highly undesirable issue. Mechanisms involving participatory authoritarianism thus constitute a central means by which the contradictions of the marketisation of state bureaucracies in non-democratic political regimes are managed in practice.

Numerous evidence exists for the integration of Russia and China into global networks that promote good governance and public sector reform, although Russia – as the more Western-facing – has achieved this to a greater degree. In 1999, the Russian government ratified the Council of Europe’s European Charter of Local Self-Government, which committed signatories to ‘applying basic rules guaranteeing the political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities’.⁶⁰ In China, the dismantling of the cradle-to-grave social security system, the ‘iron rice bowl’, was a condition of joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001⁶¹; in Russia, the streamlining of the Soviet-era public sector was instigated as Vladimir Putin became president in 2000 and the economic turmoil of the 1990s subsided.⁶² In 2005, the United Nations’ Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government in Seoul 2005 saw 148 states, including Russia and China, sign the Seoul Declaration on Participatory and Transparent Governance, which linked good governance directly to market-oriented public

⁵⁹ Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁶⁰ Council of Europe (1985) ‘European Charter of Local Self Government’. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/122>

⁶¹ Neil Hughes, *China’s Economic Challenge: Smashing the Iron Rice Bowl* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

⁶² Linda Cook, *Postcommunist Welfare States: Reform Politics in Russia and Eastern Europe* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 1-5.

sector reform and encouraged signatories to adapt domestic bureaucracy to facilitate economic competition.⁶³ As stipulations by the WTO require transparency in trade-related regulations, policies of open government have been adopted in Russia and China,⁶⁴ a trend that has been explicitly linked to the development of participatory governance.⁶⁵ Local governments in both countries are members of the international organisation that promotes local self-government, United Cities and Local Governments.⁶⁶ The World Bank has been extremely active in promoting local government reform, both structurally and fiscally: in Russia, its Local Initiative's Support Program has trained local officials and provided technical assistance to increase civic participation in municipal decision-making⁶⁷; while in China, projects have focussed on healthcare and local budget reform.⁶⁸ World Bank participatory budgeting initiatives have also been conducted in both countries.

At the same time, many of these externally promoted norms have been modified and rearticulated in the domestic rhetoric of government leadership. While the terms 'government' and 'governance' have the same translation in Russian (*upravlenie*), the idea that the governing process is not the sole preserve of state officials has been a common theme under Putin. During his presidency, he has continually espoused a normative commitment to the development of non-electoral participatory mechanisms, claiming that a turbulent international environment

⁶³ 'The Seoul Declaration on Participatory and Transparent Governance', 27 May 2005. Available at: http://www.i-p-o.org/GF6-Seoul_Declaration-27May05.htm.

⁶⁴ Jamie Horsely, 'Towards a More Open China?' in Ann Florini (ed.) *The Right To Know* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Natalya Vinogradova and Olga Moiseeva, 'Open Government and "E-Government" In Russia', *Sociological Study* 5:1 (2015), pp. 29-38.

⁶⁵ Angela Evans and Adriana Campos, 'Open Government Initiatives: Challenges of Citizen Participation', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 32:1 (2013), pp. 172-185; 'Unleashing the Potential of Open Data in Russia', World Bank, 13 January 2015. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/01/13/unleashing-the-potential-of-open-data>.

⁶⁶ See <https://www.uclg.org/en/>.

⁶⁷ Ivan Shulga, Anna Sukhova and Gagik Khachatryan, 'Empowering Communities: The Local Initiatives Support Program in Russia', Europe and Central Asia Knowledge Brief, World Bank, June 2014. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/18932/892270BRI00Box0a10ADD0VC0KNOW0NOTES.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁶⁸ Christine Wong, 'Rebuilding Government for the 21st Century: Can China Incrementally Reform the Public Sector?', *The China Quarterly* 200 (2009), pp. 929-952.

and the unstoppable forces of globalization require innovative policies for harnessing citizens' agency in the service of national development.⁶⁹ For Putin, market-oriented transformations in state bureaucracy require citizens to engage in governance, since 'welfare hand-outs without taking responsibility for one's actions are simply no longer possible in the 21st century.'⁷⁰ New deliberative mechanisms have been proliferating since the inception of the Federal Public Chamber in 2005, producing regional, municipal and even district-level public chambers. Putin has personally supported a number of initiatives promoting active citizenship, including the All Russian People's Front, a large, amorphous civic union, of which he is the figurehead and whose aim is 'to provide every person with a chance to create, to build a great country, a great Russia'.⁷¹ In his speeches to the Federal Assembly, Putin frequently calls upon this organisation to take the lead in executing a variety of social tasks, including conducting civilian oversight of environmental issues⁷² and monitoring citizens' access to healthcare.⁷³ In May 2018, he signed Presidential Decree No. 204, stating that by 2024 local governments should 'create a mechanism for direct citizen participation in the formation of a comfortable urban environment, and increase the number of citizens participating in solving urban development issues by up to 30 percent'.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Catherine Owen, 'A Genealogy of Kontrol' in Russia: From Leninist to Neoliberal Governance', *Slavic Review* 75:2 (2016), pp. 331-353.

⁷⁰ Vladimir Putin, 'Rossiya Sosredotachivayetsya: Vyzovy, Na Kotoryye My Dolzhny Otvetit', *Izvestiya*, 16 January 2012. Available at: <http://izvestia.ru/news/511884>. While Russian leaders pay lip service to the concept of civil society (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*), legislative developments have divided non-profit organisations into Foreign Agents, who receive funding from abroad and engage in political activity, and Socially Oriented NGOs which may compete for government funding to provide welfare services. The latter are now the legitimate face of independent civic activity, while the former are considered unpatriotic at best and enemies of the people at worst.

⁷¹ 'Putin Agrees to Head All-Russia People's Front', *RT*, 12 June 2013. Available at: <https://www.rt.com/russia/putin-all-russia-front-600/>.

⁷² 'Poslaniye Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniyu', *Kremlin.ru*, 20 February 2019. Available at: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59863>.

⁷³ 'Poslaniye Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniyu', *Kremlin.ru*, 1 March 2018. Available at: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>.

⁷⁴ 'Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 07.05.2018g. No. 204', *Kremlin.ru*, 7 May 2018. Available at: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/43027/page/1>.

An analogous trend is observable in Chinese rhetoric, with leadership transforming its vocabulary to reflect global shifts in approaches to government. In the latter half of the 1980s, the idea of the ‘three selfs’ became prominent in government discourse to legitimise government restructuring: self-management, self-education and self-service. This re-iteration of ‘self’ reinforces the globally promoted neoliberal idea of resilient and self-reliant citizenship mentioned above. As Howell notes, ‘it signals a more indirect role for the state whereby it regulates rather than commands, paralleling the direction of market reforms’.⁷⁵ In the early 2000s, the slogan ‘Small Government, Large Society’ was coined to promote the downsizing of the public sector.⁷⁶ Around the same time, the concept of ‘orderly participation’ [you xu canyu] – now a central concept in Chinese governance – first appeared in government discourse. The new role of government considered to be to ‘lead citizens to manage themselves according to the law [yindao renmin qunzhong yifa guanli ziji de shiqing].’⁷⁷ ‘Orderly participation’ was repeated in Jiang Zemin’s 2002 Party Congress report,⁷⁸ in Hu Jintao’s report five years later,⁷⁹ and most recently in Xi Jinping’s 2017 speech to the 19th Party Congress. Across the three speeches, the idea that the role of government should be to nurture citizens’ self-management is repeatedly emphasised, expanded upon and linked to ‘orderly participation’ in governance – already by 2006, Sigley had noted a ‘shift in vocabulary and conceptualization within Chinese

⁷⁵ Jude Howell, ‘Adaptation under Scrutiny: Peering Through the Lens of Community Governance in China’, *International Political Sociology* 45:3 (2016), p. 491.

⁷⁶ John Burns, ‘Public Sector Reform and the State: The Case of China’, *Public Administration Quarterly* 24:4 (2000), pp. 419-436. That around a decade later, former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, employed a virtually identical slogan, ‘Big Society’, to encourage greater community engagement, attests to the perceived universal applicability of the public sector reform agenda and the increased role for citizens it requires.

⁷⁷ ‘Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu zhiding guomin jingji he shehui fazhan di shi ge wu nian jihua de jianyi’ [Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Proposals for the tenth five-year plan for social development], 11/10/2000. Available at: http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2000/content_60538.htm

⁷⁸ Gaoju zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi weida qizhi wei duoqu quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui xin shengli er fendou, [Hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics: Striving for new victory in building a moderately prosperous society]. Report at the 17th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, 15/10/2007. Available at: http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2007-10/24/content_785431.htm.

⁷⁹ Jiang Zemin tongzhi zai dang de shiliu da shang suozuo baogao quanwen quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi shiye xin jumian [Comrade Jiang Zemin's report at the 16th Party Congress: Building a moderately prosperous society and creating a new situation in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics], 18/11/2002. Available at: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/zyjh_674906/t10855.shtml.

discourse from a notion of “government” (*zhengfu*) as a task of “planning” (*jihua*) and “administration” (*xingzheng*) to one that involves “management” (*guanli*) and “governance” (*zhili*).⁸⁰ Xi’s 2017 speech goes further to emphasise his administration’s commitment to the establishment of a regulatory state in China: ‘The government needs to transform its functions, further streamline administration and delegate powers, develop new ways of regulation and supervision... building itself into a service-oriented government’.⁸¹

While both leaders embrace this new, NPM-inspired approach to state functions, Putin⁸² and Xi⁸³ claim that external political models cannot be imposed upon the societies they govern, and leaders and analysts have developed new conceptualisations of democracy. In Russia, the concept of ‘managed democracy’ entered the political lexicon in the early 2000s, seeking to capture the way in which political competition is controlled, or ‘managed’, by the country’s leaders in order to ensure stability.⁸⁴ Around the same time, the term ‘sovereign democracy’ was evoked by Kremlin strategist Vladislav Surkov, underscoring Russia’s independence from foreign incursions, following the Colour Revolutions sweeping the post-Soviet space.⁸⁵ In China, the term ‘consultative’ or ‘deliberative’ (*xieshang*) democracy appears in government discourse to capture the role of the citizen in China’s one-party state. According to CCP theorists, socialist deliberative democracy is unique to China and stems from mass line ideology, and involves ‘conducting extensive consultations before and after decision-making,

⁸⁰ Gary Sigley, ‘Chinese Governmentalities: Government, Governance and the Socialist Market Economy’, *Economy and Society* 35:4 (2006), pp. 487-508.

⁸¹ Xi Jinping, ‘Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era’, Speech delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18, 2017. Available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf

⁸² Vladimir Putin, ‘Demokratiya i Kachestvo Gosudarstva’, *Kommersant*, 6 February 2012. Available at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1866753>.

⁸³ Xi, ‘Secure a Decisive Victory’.

⁸⁴ Andrei Tsgankov, *The Strong State in Russia: Development and Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 132-134.

⁸⁵ Vladislav Surkov, ‘Nationalization of the Future: Paragraphs pro Sovereign Democracy’, *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 47:4 (2009), pp. 8-21.

and striving to form a consensus'.⁸⁶ This attempt to maintain a clear ideological thread to the Maoist period contrasts with the dramatic bureaucratic reforms undertaken since that period, but is vital for the CCP's claims to legitimacy in an era of regulatory statehood. Clearly, the Russian and Chinese reformulations of democracy are very different, emerging from each state's unique historical context and geopolitical circumstances; however, they share the common purpose of legitimating the combination of democratising practices of openness and pluralism with the authoritarian practices of control and monism.

As mentioned, pre-existing political cultures and meanings frame the legitimation of new conceptualisations. In the two countries, tensions exist in this sphere. In China, new models of active citizenship fit well with the mass line, which allows Chinese leaders to present new modes of participation as a continuation of Chinese socialism and a means of 'national rejuvenation'.⁸⁷ However, as Howell notes, 'The Leninist notion of an elite vanguard of Party workers collides with the more democratic notion of active citizenship'.⁸⁸ Thus, party leaders must balance the promotion of active citizenship with the CCP's leading role in society. Promoting participatory authoritarianism is one way of doing this. The Russian case is more challenging still: Soviet collapse left Russia bereft of a legitimating ideology for these tools (and for governance in general). It is therefore harder for Russian leadership to justify them, and leaves them open to criticism as 'Potemkin villages' and 'window dressing'.⁸⁹ Becoming active in local governance is consistently framed in Putin's speeches to the Federal Assembly as a patriotic duty in the face of a challenging global environment. Thus, domestic rhetoric has

⁸⁶ Xinhua, 'Zhonggong zhongyang yinfa "Guanyu jiaqiang shehui zhuyi xieshang minzhu jianshe de yijian"', Xinhua, 9 February 2015. Available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-02/09/c_1114310670.htm

⁸⁷ Xi, *The Governance of China*.

⁸⁸ Howell, 'Adaptation under Scrutiny', p. 503.

⁸⁹ Oleg Bozhkov and Svetlana Ignatova, 'Vzaimodeistvie institutov mestnoi vlasti i predprinimatelstva na sele', *Peterburgskaya Sotsiologiya Segodnya* 6 (2015), pp. 469-489.

not simply reproduced global discourses, but has attempted to incorporate them into extant traditions and narratives of governance.

In Russia and China, leaders share the global commitment to transforming government functions away from direct welfare provision and towards forms of regulatory statehood, while eschewing the forms of political pluralism that have accompanied this transformation in the West. Yet, as discussed above, this shift from government to governance requires mechanisms for citizen participation: without such mechanisms, regulation-oriented governments are unable to formulate effective policy or ensure that it is delivered. Practices of participatory authoritarianism enable governments to elicit citizens' views without affecting overall non-democratic political stability.

Institutions and Practices of Participatory Authoritarianism in Russia and China

In international policy-oriented parlance, the regulation and development of government-organised mechanisms of participatory governance falls under the umbrella of local self-government (hereafter LSG), and has been substantially reshaped in both countries following market reforms.⁹⁰ Distinguished from more independent, 'unauthorised' forms of participation, such as demonstrations, pickets and some autonomous civic groups,⁹¹ which may be considered as belonging to civil society, LSG is an important feature of local political organisation in both countries, and includes practices such as public hearings and consultations,

⁹⁰ As Himsworth notes, the term 'local self-government' sounds cumbersome in English, with the reflexive form 'self'-government seeming superfluous. However, it was incorporated to highlight the active role of citizens and the autonomy from central government; hence, I follow the usage of this term as it has been translated. Chis Himsworth, *The European Charter of Local Self-Government: A Treaty for Local Democracy*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

⁹¹ Kanishka Jayasuriya and Garry Rodan, 'Beyond Hybrid Regimes: More Participation, Less Contestation in South-East Asia', *Democratization* 14:5 (2007), pp. 773-794.

monitory activities, participatory budgeting, and participatory pricing. Some of these, such as hearings and monitory activities, embody traditional state-society relations, since officials retain full control of the agenda and citizens occupy a supplicant role. Some, such as participatory budgeting, some types of consultations, and participatory pricing, require new forms of active citizenship as citizens is conceived as a designer of policy outcomes and government control is partially – but only partially – ceded. This section traces the legislative development of LSG in Russia and China, and illustrates the two practices of participatory authoritarianism outlined in the first section. It reveals the emergence of new mechanisms that combine democratic and authoritarian practices, which enable officials to acknowledge citizens' political agency while harnessing it in service of state-directed projects.

The development of LSG has taken diverse trajectories in Russia and China, not least thanks to the differing relationships between central and sub-national governments. In China, central government encourages local authorities to engage in policy experimentations in what Heilmann calls 'experimentation under hierarchy'.⁹² Promotion for local cadres often depends on their capacity to develop innovative government mechanisms.⁹³ Hence, the development of participatory mechanisms has taken a locally multifarious trajectory, with some cities, such as Hangzhou and Shanghai, becoming national leaders in participatory innovations, while others, such as Xi'an, lacking such developments.⁹⁴ This means that although Russia is a federation, composed of relatively autonomous 'federal subjects', greater homogeneity in governance practices exists across Russia's regions and municipalities, owing to Putin's policies of

⁹² Sebastian Heilmann, 'Policy Experimentation in China's Economic Rise', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43 (2008), pp. 1-26.

⁹³ Interview, local scholar, Hangzhou, 13/3/2019.

⁹⁴ Interview, local scholar, Xi'an, 25/2/2019.

recentralisation during the 2000s.⁹⁵ It is therefore far easier to generalise about LSG in Russia than in China, since the diversity of practices in the latter is vast. I now consider the legislative development in each case.

Russia's institutions of LSG were created during the early post-Soviet period during something of a golden era for local governance. Article 12 of the 1993 Constitution states: 'Local self-government shall be independent within the limits of its authority. The bodies of local self-government shall not be part of the system of bodies of state authority'.⁹⁶ In short, LSG should operate independently from state bureaucracy, becoming the primary site for citizens to engage in local politics. Opinions diverge on what this relationship means in practice: total independence from the state; a hybrid expression of civil society delivering government services; or a pragmatic limitation of government intervention in local politics.⁹⁷ However, researchers agree that the combination of sub-national political hierarchies, complicated legislation and public apathy has stymied the development of an independent LSG.⁹⁸

The three primary national-level legislative documents for the development of Russian LSG are the 1995 Federal Law 154 'On the General Principles of the Organization of Local Self-Government'⁹⁹; the 2003 Federal Law 131 'On the Organisation of Local Self Government'¹⁰⁰;

⁹⁵ Vladimir Gel'man, 'The Dynamics of Sub-National Authoritarianism: Russia in Comparative Perspective' in Vladimir Gel'man and Cameron Ross (eds.) *The Politics of Subnational Authoritarianism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 11.

⁹⁶ The Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993). Available at: <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-01.htm>.

⁹⁷ Adrian Campbell, 'State versus Society? Local Government and the Reconstruction of the Russian State', *Local Government Studies* 32:5 (2006), pp. 659-676.

⁹⁸ Vladimir Gel'man, 'Ot mestnogo samoupravleniya k vertikali vlasti', *Pro et Contra* 11:1 (2007), pp. 6-18; Bozhkov and Ignatova, 'Vzaimodeistvie institutov mestnoi vlasti'.

⁹⁹ 'Federal'nyi Zakon "Ob obshchikh printsipakh mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiiskoi Federatsii" ot 28.08.1995 N 154 FZ", consultant.ru. Available at: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_7642/.

¹⁰⁰ 'Federal'nyi zakon Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 6 oktyabrya 2003g. N 131-FZ "Ob obshchikh printsipakh organizatsii mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiiskoi Federatsii", *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 8 October 2003. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2003/10/08/zakonsamouprav.html>.

and the 2014 Federal Law 212-FZ ‘On the Basis of Public Control in the Russian Federation’.¹⁰¹ In each, the dual logics of openness and control are evident. For instance, the 1995 law devolved responsibility for the regulation of LSG to the regional level. However, studies show that these reforms intended to enhance LSG actually resulted their subordination to the regional authorities.¹⁰² It also resulted in a wide variety of local legislative arrangements, many of which undermined the principle of independence set out in the Constitution.¹⁰³ The 2003 law sought to minimise this heterogeneity and, while it delineates the organisational form of territories of LSG in a manner that can be universally applied, Chapter Five specifies the forms that civic participation can take, including a local referendum, municipal elections, a citizens’ meeting or conference, a citizens’ lawmaking initiative, public hearings, public debates, polls, and citizens’ appeals to local governments. Some of these, such as polls, hearings and appeals, replicate Soviet-era state-society dynamics, but others, such as law-making initiatives and debates, seek to foment this more active citizenship, which was developed in the 2014 legislation.

This 2014 law has had the greatest effect for LSG as facilitating practices of participatory authoritarianism in Russia. It extended and elaborated the developing network of participatory mechanisms, specifying their organisation, their outputs and the government’s response. Such mechanisms include holding a public examination (*obshchestvennaya ekspertiza*), whereby local civic experts study draft laws and assess their societal impact, and conducting public inspections (*obshchestvennye proverki*), in which monitory bodies staffed by members of the

¹⁰¹ ‘Federal’nyi zakon Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 21 iyulya 2014g. N 212-FZ “Ob Osnovakh obshchestvennogo kontrolya v Rossiiskoi Federatsii”’, *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 23 July 2014. Available at: <http://www.rg.ru/2014/07/23/zakon-dok.html>.

¹⁰² Peter Kirkow, ‘Russia’s regional puzzle: Institutional change and economic adaptation’, *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation*, 9:3 (1997), pp. 261-287; Tomila Lankina, *Governing the Locals: Local Self-Government and Ethnic Mobilization in Russia* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

¹⁰³ Helmut Wollmann and Elena Gritsenko, ‘Local Self Government in Russia: Between Decentralisation and Re-Centralisation’ in Cameron Ross and Adrian Campbell (eds.) *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008).

public collect information on government bodies considered to be poorly performing and develop remedial proposals. Importantly, each of these mechanisms are linked to public chambers, public councils and other corporate bodies, which *de facto* undermines the critical or pluralistic potential of participation, predisposing them to upholding the *status quo*. At the same time, this law has been widely criticized as contradicting large swathes of existing legislation, and being extremely difficult to implement.¹⁰⁴ Local scholars and activists in Russia admitted to not understanding the differences between the various types of participatory mechanism or how they should be implemented in practice.¹⁰⁵ This means that while there is extensive legislation governing local civic participation in Russia, in practice, these activities tend to be *ad hoc*, open to change and easily manipulable.

In China, LSG as a form of local political management is enshrined in the Constitution (its current version dating to 1982). Article 111 of Section Five states that the most local form of urban government, the residents' committees, should ensure 'people's mediation, public security, public health and other matters in order to manage public affairs and social services in their areas, mediate civil disputes, help maintain public order and convey residents' opinions and demands and make suggestions to the people's government'.¹⁰⁶ The Constitution states that committee's chairpersons and deputies should be directly elected by the residents; however, interview respondents indicated that the most appropriate people for the job are often selected in an uncompetitive process.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, unlike the Russian legislation, the institutional forms that local governance should take are not specified, which has enabled

¹⁰⁴ Catherine Owen, 'The Struggle for Meaning of Obshchestvennyi Kontrol' in Contemporary Russia: Civic Participation Between Resistance and Compliance after 2011-2012 Elections', *Europe-Asia Studies* 69:3 (2017), pp. 379-400.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, scholar, St Petersburg, 13/5/2019; interview, civic activist, St Petersburg, 26/4/2019.

¹⁰⁶ 'Constitution of the People's Republic of China', The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 14 March 2004. Available at: http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm.

¹⁰⁷ Interview, residents committee member, Shanghai, 23/5/2019; interview, residents, Shanghai, 25/5/2019.

authorities in China to experiment with innovations in community governance. Also, unlike Russia, there is no official database or website that holds all Chinese legislation, and they are scattered across different areas of government. Hence, given the vast regional variations and the limitations of space, I focus here on the expansion of residents committees (*juweihui*) as a participatory innovation developed directly in response to market-oriented bureaucratic transformation, which extends across all urban areas in China and through which other grassroots participatory activities are often organized.

Prior to reform, urban Chinese citizens were organised into socialist work units known as *danwei*, which were attached to State-Owned Enterprises and through which welfare including housing, medical care, pensions and subsidies for food and transport were distributed to employees. As market reforms were introduced in 1980s, the bulk of local welfare provision was shifted from the *danwei* to the local community – in particular, to local residents’ committees. This entailed a profound transformation in the relationship between citizens and local government, and innovations in community governance were developed as a response to the void left by this sudden withdrawal of state-organised social provision.¹⁰⁸ Article 2 of the 1989 ‘Law of the Organization of Residents’ Committee’, which delineated residents’ committees new role in decentralised governance, defines them as ‘a grass-roots autonomous organization for the realization of residents’ self-management, self-education and self-service’.¹⁰⁹ In 2000, Beijing became concerned about the social and ideological void left by the dismantling of the *danwei* system, and tasked the Ministry of Civil Affairs with developing initiatives to revitalise local communities and strengthen Party control. It published a document stating that community building work was a ‘crucial tool in national efforts to promote social

¹⁰⁸ Chunrong Liu, ‘Empowered Autonomy: The Politics of Community Governance Innovations in Shanghai’, *Chinese Public Administration Review* 5:1-2 (2008), pp. 61-71.

¹⁰⁹ *Juweihui zuzhi fa* [Law of the Organization of Residents’ Committee] (1989). Available at http://www.npc.gov.cn/wxzl/gongbao/1989-12/26/content_1481131.htm.

development, to raise living standards, to expand grass-roots democracy and to maintain urban stability'.¹¹⁰ Local residents' committees were designated as one of the central actors in this process, and should encourage citizens to participate in local governance at the street level by organizing voluntary and socially relevant activities.¹¹¹ It is mostly at this street level, with the help of residents' committees, that various experimental participatory activities have taken place, such as participatory budgeting initiatives, as it is here that is considered to form the basis for the construction of support for the Party-state.¹¹² Thus, unlike in Russia, the presence of the ruling party is felt even at the grassroots level, and residents' committees members are pre-selected and should also be members of the CCP.¹¹³

Despite these greater levels of penetration into society by the Party-state, examples abound of the development of new participatory mechanisms in various cities and city-districts in China, including participatory budgeting initiatives, the use of local government offices as open forums to garner citizens' policy proposals, and the development of 'open-style government' in which city officials establish an advisory group composed of civic experts to conduct oversight and provide expert input.¹¹⁴ At the same time, their democratizing potential must not be overstated – these mechanisms are only advisory in nature, and are usually dominated by the local CCP members. I now turn to an elucidation of the practices of participatory authoritarianism that are being produced through these various mechanisms of LSG in Russia and China.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ David Bray, 'Building "Community": New Strategies of Governance in Urban China', *Economy and Society* 35:4 (2006), p. 536.

¹¹¹ Thomas Herberer and Christian Göbel, *The Politics of Community Building in Urban China* (London: Routledge, 2011).

¹¹² Interview, local official, Shanghai, 7/6/2019. Other research has explored municipal-level participatory governance, which, for reasons of space, I cannot explore here in detail. See Duckett and Wang, 'Extending Political Participation in China'.

¹¹³ Interview, scholar, Shanghai, 15/3/2019; Interview residents' committee member, 2/6/2019.

¹¹⁴ Duckett and Wang, 'Extending Political Participation in China'.

¹¹⁵ Due to the difficulty of observing these practices, especially as an outsider, I rely on the experience of current and former members of participatory bodies described to me in interviews.

The first practice, which occurs at the level of process, involves local officials widening citizens' participation in policy processes, while deliberately limiting the democratizing potential, for example by vetting potential participants to ensure access only to compliant individuals or ejecting participants during the event for airing inappropriate opinions. This means that citizens with a background of activism are often excluded, while explicitly 'pro-regime' individuals or apolitical celebrities are admitted.¹¹⁶ One respondent in Samara, Russia, explained, 'The method of selection is to a large extent controlled. Firstly people don't choose the candidates they want, but the candidates they are told to choose... Or they choose the people whose names they recognise. I don't really believe in the selection process.'¹¹⁷ City activists with particular expertise (for instance, accessibility for disabled people or recycling initiatives) may be invited to represent their cause in policy forums and initiatives, but if their participation is considered too antagonistic, the invitation may be withdrawn.¹¹⁸ Respondents in Russia suspected that some participants were specially planted by local officials to disrupt the proceedings or ensure the outcomes desired by the government.¹¹⁹ In China, participants should ideally be CCP members and are nearly always vetted by local officials before they can take part.¹²⁰ In both cases, tales abound of individuals whose invitation to participate was withdrawn after they aired opinions deemed overly critical.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Catherine Owen, "Consentful Contention".

¹¹⁷ Interview, public chamber member, Samara, 31/10/2012.

¹¹⁸ Interview, city infrastructure activist, St Petersburg, 22/5/2018; interview, recycling activist, St Petersburg, 8/6/2018.

¹¹⁹ Interview, participatory budgeting participant, St Petersburg, 16/9/2019; Interview, public council member, St Petersburg, 13/7/2012; Interview, public council member, St Petersburg, 21/8/2012.

¹²⁰ Interview, scholar, Shanghai, 1/3/2019. Deliberative polling, whereby a randomly selected (hence free of government influence) population is invited to debate policy, has been implemented in a few municipalities. See James Fishkin, James Baogang He, Robert Luskin and Alice Siu, 'Deliberative Democracy in an Unlikely Place: Deliberative Polling in China', *British Journal of Political Science* 40:2 (2010), pp. 1–14.

¹²¹ Interview, public council member, Samara, 2/11/2012; Interview, former public council member, Samara, 1/11/2012; interview, scholar, Hangzhou, 13/3/2019.

The second practice, occurring at the level of outcome, involves local officials conducting a participatory event, but de-emphasising its results, for example by privately making the relevant decisions beforehand, drastically watering down any transformative potential in the follow-up legislation or using a heavily engineered participatory event to justify broader public policy decisions. In China's participatory pricing initiatives (explicitly developed to manage the transition to a market economy), decisions are sometimes already made before citizens are invited to deliberate.¹²² One Hangzhou-based interviewee explained, 'Why do governments hold participatory activities? They want to show that the public supports their activities. People will complain less if they are invited to talk to the government.'¹²³ In participatory budgeting initiatives in both Russia and China, local officials reserve the right to deselected projects deemed inappropriate.¹²⁴ In the case of Russian participatory institutions, members are under no illusions regarding the limitations of their influence, believing they have leverage in some, relatively marginal or apolitical areas but not in others considered to be of strategic importance.¹²⁵ In both cases, new deliberative or consultative initiatives are formally advisory, meaning that local governments can easily disregard inconvenient recommendations. Yet citizens are not always ignored – research on participatory institutions in both states demonstrate that they do have limited impact on policy outcomes.¹²⁶ One member of a participatory body in Samara recalled, 'There have been three instances so far in the Public Budget Council when they took the societal experts' advice either in full or in part.'¹²⁷ Since

¹²² Xuan Qin and Baogang He, 'Deliberation, demobilization, and limited empowerment: a survey study on participatory pricing in China', *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 19:4 (2018), pp. 694-708.

¹²³ Interview, scholar, Hangzhou, 13/3/2019.

¹²⁴ Interview, participatory budgeting participant, St Petersburg, 16/9/2019; interview, scholar, Hangzhou, 14/3/2019.

¹²⁵ Interview, public council member 1, Moscow, 6/11/2012; Interview, public council member 2, Moscow, 9/11/2012.

¹²⁶ Owen, "'Consentful Contentment' in a Corporate State"; Greg Distelhorst, 'The Power of Empty Promises: Quasi-democratic Institutions and Activism in China', *Comparative Political Studies* 50:4 (2017), pp. 464-498.

¹²⁷ Interview, public council member, Samara, 14/8/2012.

the council's term is normally three years, this would amount to adopting citizens' recommendations once a year.

Despite this similar approach to curating participatory governance, Russia and China evince very different state-society relations: studies report consistently high levels of trust in public institutions among Chinese citizens¹²⁸, while in Russia the opposite is the case.¹²⁹ This stark contrast was reflected in the way participants framed their engagement in interviews: in China, it was seen as an important patriotic duty, with some invoking Xi Jinping's pronouncements on participation,¹³⁰ while in Russia, a majority reported disappointment and frustration with the way in which the authorities interacted with them. One citizen explained, 'I really saw some officials who were not so stereotypical, who were really willing to make some changes and to make this project work, and that was refreshing, but most of them, I'm afraid, are stereotypical!'¹³¹ Stemming from this, government-organised participatory bodies in China tend to be guided and delimited from above by Party-oriented organisations, remain closely tied to the CCP, and reflect the overall dominant position of the local state in society. In this context, participatory authoritarianism represents something of an opening-up for policy-making processes in China.¹³² In Russia, however, analogous bodies in part aim to mitigate the dire relations between state and society. In the words of one senior St Petersburg official, '[citizens'] loyalty to the government is in a very sad position – they don't like the government, but they hate it.'¹³³ Thus practices of participatory authoritarianism in Russia seek to tone down – or

¹²⁸ Qing Yang and Wenfang Tang, 'Exploring Sources of Institutional Trust in China: Culture, Mobilization, or Performance?', *Asian Politics and Society* 2:3 (2010), pp. 415-436.

¹²⁹ Vladimir Schlapentokh, 'Trust in Public Institutions in Russia: The Lowest in the World', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39:2 (2006), pp. 153-174.

¹³⁰ Interview, participant in residents' committees' activities 1, Shanghai, 5/6/2019; interview, participant in residents' committees' activities 2, Shanghai, 5/6/2019.

¹³¹ Interview, participatory budgeting participant, St Petersburg, 10/5/2019.

¹³² Luigi Tomba, *The Government Next Door: Neighborhood Politics in Urban China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); interview, community organisation member, Shanghai, 14/6/2019; interview, residents' committee member, Shanghai, 28/5/2019.

¹³³ Interview, official, St Petersburg, 8/5/2019.

co-opt – anti-government sentiment into something more palatable and constructive for local officials.

Conclusion

This article has presented the concept of participatory authoritarianism, and its small typology of practices, as a means for understanding how new forms of active citizenship are conceived and managed in Russia and China. These practices include simultaneously extending participatory opportunities while restricting who can participate, and holding participatory events but undermining their outcomes. While the nature of state-society relations in Russia and China differ substantially, both governments are attempting to harness the growing desire of citizens to engage in local politics while ensuring that the state remains dominant. The result is the legislative development and discursive legitimation of a form of citizenship that requires engagement but compliance, responsibility but obedience, autonomy but restraint.

Three conclusions about the nature of local governance in contemporary non-democratic states can be drawn from this discussion. First, new forms of civic participation have become necessary as non-democratic governments have implemented market reforms of the public sectors without undergoing broader processes of democratisation. The consequence of shifting towards regulatory statehood is that governments are no longer the primary source of knowledge or expertise about policy requirements, and input by non-state actors becomes essential for effective policy-making and delivery. The proliferation of participatory mechanisms therefore provide evidence that market-oriented bureaucratic transformation cannot occur without the provision of some avenues of political engagement for citizens.

Practices of participatory authoritarianism constitute governments' attempts to manage and limit this political transformation.

Second, the article proposed that types of active citizenship are important in non-democratic states like Russia and China. Indeed, Russian and Chinese leaders have embraced the notion of civic participation, seeking to incorporate it into broader theories and ideologies of governing. This demonstrates that voluntary practices of civic participation enacted by active and engaged citizens are considered essential for local governance in an era of late capitalism, as market-oriented political subjectivities are produced through interactions between the individual and the local state – in democratic and non-democratic regimes alike.¹³⁴ At the same time, the way in which these practices are manifested and integrated into broader systems of political meanings are culturally specific and historically contingent, as demonstrated above. Hence, participatory authoritarianism opens the possibility of unsettling the 'territorial trap' which links types of political practices to certain geographical locales by suggesting that all states are constituted by practices that include both 'democratic' practices of openness and accountability and 'authoritarian' practices of control and arbitrariness.¹³⁵ Thus, it extends Foucault's analysis of liberalism in an era of late capitalism by demonstrates that both strategies of governing are productive of and rely upon each other in contemporary non-democracies as well. Works on 'authoritarian neoliberalism' attest to the co-constitutive nature of liberalising and authoritarian tendencies in Western contexts; I have illustrated that similar insights can apply to the 'non-West'.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 1999), p. 155.

¹³⁵ John Agnew, 'The Territorial Trap: the Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory', *Review of International Political Economy* 1:1 (1994), pp. 53–80.

¹³⁶ Ian Bruff, 'The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism', *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Culture, Economics and Society* 26:1 (2014), pp. 113-129; Ian Bruff and Cemal Burak Tansel, 'Authoritarian neoliberalism: trajectories of knowledge production and praxis', *Globalizations* 16:3 (2019), pp. 233-244.

Finally, the article has shown how non-democratic leaders incorporate global, ostensibly democratic norms of governance into domestic practices of authoritarian rule. As the two states have engaged with international organisations promoting good governance and public sector reform, so their leaders have increasingly adopted analogous language and promoted greater roles for citizens in local policy processes. However, the way in which this discourse has been embodied in legislation, and the practices that are emerging as a result, demonstrate how the democratic potential of these global norms can be stymied by pre-existing political cultures. It reveals that global democracy promotion may often consolidate domestic authoritarian governance.