



TERTIARY SECTOR AS A MODERATOR FOR DEVELOPING FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICY

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Introduction

■ Today, Russia's third sector plays a special role in implementing family and demographic policy and achieving objectives aimed at improving the quality of life for families with children. The new national Strategy for Implementing Family and Demographic Policy, which will remain in effect until 2036 ("Strategy for the implementation of family and demographic policy...", 2025), identifies non-profit organizations and civil society institutions as key actors. Alongside state and local government bodies, as well as the scientific community, they work to strengthen the institution of the family, increase birth rates, protect reproductive health, and account for national and socio-cultural specificities in the implementation of family and demographic policies across Russian regions.

The involvement of the third sector in developing and implementing social policies, particularly family and demographic policies, is frequently discussed in academic literature (Balázs, 2019; Klupt, 2016; Pyakuryal, 1989; Šakotić et al., 2026; Tsertekidis & Polyzoidis, 2024). Tsertekidis & Polyzoidis note that in the development of family and demographic policy, the third sector acts as both an advocate and an innovator (Tsertekidis & Polyzoidis, 2024: 2). By drawing attention to the needs of the most vulnerable population groups, NGOs act as moderators of interaction (El Chaarani and Raimi, 2022; Srivastava et al., 2016), influence public opinion, which in turn can lead to changes in the legislative framework of the policy being developed (Anheier,



2014). The innovative role of the third sector is linked to its flexibility, its capacity to test various models of interaction among policy actors, and its extensive use of mechanisms to engage diverse population groups (Lewis, 2006). The classical model of mediation presupposes that the intermediary meets a number of conditions: operational capacity, expertise, independence, and legitimacy (Abbott, 2017). These conditions underpin conceptions of civil society as an ideal environment wherein organizations operate independently on behalf of a broad range of stakeholders. However, the real-world contexts in which NGOs function are complex and often contradictory, particularly regarding their independence from funding sources (Hodge, 2005; Lu, 2019). Consequently, the frameworks of NGO legitimacy and their mediating functions vary considerably across countries and contexts (de Moraes Holanda, 2023). The analytical persuasiveness of NGOs as mediators lies in their ability to navigate complex political, technical, and ethical fault lines, with this intermediate position constituting not a limitation, but rather a defining feature of their role (Eitan, 2025). At the same time, the very fact of these differences does not diminish the value of NGOs' mediating function, and mediation can assume various institutional forms depending on the configuration of state-civil society relations.

Although many countries offer examples of third-sector involvement in both developing and implementing specific aspects of family policy (Tsertekidis & Polyzoidis, 2024) and of scholarly study of the outcomes and associated challenges of such involvement, the question of third-sector organizations' participation in developing and implementing family-friendly policy is relatively novel both in practice and in research. We identify several reasons justifying the relevance of such a study in Russia today. First, it is the recognized role of third-sector organizations as moderators of interaction between the state, the market, households, and as channels for social innovation (Evers & Laville, 2004), capable of experimenting with new approaches to family support. Second, Russia features actively functioning employers' associations (e.g., unions of industrialists and entrepreneurs) and public parent organizations, which utilize their non-profit status to represent various civil society segments. Third, the dissemination of family-friendly policies in Russia remains ineffective (Bagirova, 2025), even though state policy aims to broaden participation by including business and the third sector.

We note that family-friendly policy within organizations is studied by scholars worldwide. A bibliometric analysis of publications on this topic indexed in the Web of Science from 1985 to 2022 led Li and Zhang to conclude there is a fluctuating trend of growth in the number of articles and a rapid increase in citations in recent decades (Li and Zhang, 2023). A meta-analysis of publications, also conducted by Blom and colleagues using data from the Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Scopus citation databases, differentiates between family-friendly policies implemented by organizations and workplace supports provided by specific employees within organizations. Although the policy encompasses a wide range of measures consolidated into four groups (flexible working schedule policies; leave policies; dependent care support



policies; and career policies aimed at mitigating negative career consequences due to employees' family responsibilities (French & Shockley, 2020)), Blom and his colleagues conclude that support originating from organizational employees and social relationships is more effective in alleviating work-family conflict (French et al., 2018) and is generally more important than organizational policy (Blom et al., 2025). Furthermore, based on the meta-analysis results, the authors link the effectiveness of family-friendly policies to the strength of national family policy: the stronger the latter, the stronger the policy must be from organizations to be noticed by employees and become effective for them (Blom et al., 2025).

Institutional Context for the Development of Non-Profit Organizations in Russia

More than 222,000 NGOs are currently registered in Russia, with the most prevalent forms being public organizations (over 59,000) and autonomous non-profits (approximately 49,000). Additionally, 700 employer associations, more than 9,700 associations, and over 14,000 trade unions are active. For one in three NGOs, subsidies and grants from authorities at various levels constitute the primary source of funding (Efficiency of NGO Work: An Inside View, 2024). In this regard, it is important to note that following the 1990s, described by Howell as the "golden era" of civil society (Howell 2012: 43), a growing trend has emerged across several countries to limit civil society organizations (Nagy et al., 2025), alongside a trend of increasing pressure on NGOs that constrains their activities (van der Borgh & Terwindt, 2012), and a tendency toward heightened political control and the promotion of organizations loyal to the state agenda (Bejma, 2019), among others.

Russia's civic space is characterized by a high degree of regulation and heterogeneity within the third sector, wherein organizations with varying levels of autonomy, funding sources, and formats of interaction with state structures coexist. The Russian NGO sector encompasses a broad spectrum of actors: from human rights organizations and professional communities to networks of parent associations and regional employer unions. Their role as moderators of interaction between the state and business depends on their institutional position, funding sources, and degree of integration into state mechanisms. For instance, the regional employer association "Sverdlovsk Regional Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs," analyzed in this article, has operated as an employers' association since 1991. It unites individuals and legal entities, as well as sectoral organizations of industrialists and entrepreneurs, representing the interests of the majority of large and medium-sized enterprises in the region and their members within the framework of social partnership with government authorities. Its permanent source of funding is membership fees.

The second type of NGO featured in this study comprises parent committees. These typically rely on mixed funding (membership fees, grants, project-based



financing), as well as resources from educational and social institutions. For example, nationwide initiatives by parent committees involve competitive project funding from public organizations, supported by relevant ministries, reflecting the practice of integrating such initiatives into state social support programs.

Within the development of family-friendly policy, the role of the third sector in Russia is distinctly differentiated, shaped by the specific characteristics of organizations and their positioning within the socio-political landscape. Professional and industry associations, such as the Sverdlovsk Regional Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, primarily function as intermediaries, articulating and advancing employer interests within socio-economic dialogue with the state. Family and parent initiatives, by contrast, more often operate at the local, community level, pursuing their goals through participation in state and public family support programs. Thus, a segmented model of interaction has emerged, wherein each type of organization occupies its own niche, determined by its resources, strategies, and institutional context. This predetermines a departure from the classical ideal type of mediation based on the intermediary's complete autonomy. In Russia, civil society has historically developed as a form of interaction between society and the state, wherein trade unions and expert associations performed the function of conveying interests. The contemporary third sector is characterized by a significant degree of embeddedness in state funding models, rendering the autonomy of many organizations relative. A paradox of mediation emerges: despite limited institutional independence, organizations continue to perform mediating functions through formalized channels of social partnership, where mediation takes the form of institutionalized coordination within a regulated civic space.

At the same time, Russia's proactive demographic policy, focused on raising the birth rate, is fostering growing recognition of the need to integrate a holistic corporate subsystem into the broader demographic policy framework. However, although state authorities and employers increasingly recognize the role of companies in solving family and demographic problems, corporate initiatives thus far remain spontaneous, fragmented, and poorly integrated into broader systems of social governance. The research question of our article is as follows: Is it possible, and if so, what is the potential role of non-profit organizations in facilitating dialogue between the state and business regarding the formation of a sustainable family-friendly policy?

Methods

The study employs a mixed-methods design, enabling analysis of the formation of a family-friendly environment at the intersection of interests among employees, businesses, and the state, as well as an assessment of the potential role of civil society institutions in coordinating this interaction. The empirical foundation comprises



quantitative and qualitative data collected by the authors across three macro-regions of Russia: the Urals, Siberia, and the country's North-West. The selection of these regions is based on the diversity of their economic profiles, geographical coverage, and specific socio-demographic contexts. The survey questionnaire and interview guides were approved by the expert council of Ural Federal University. Prior to interviews, respondents were informed of the study's aims and objectives, and written consent for participation and data processing was obtained.

Survey of the working population (quantitative phase). The first part of the study utilizes data from a survey of working individuals of reproductive age, designed to gauge attitudes toward corporate family-friendly policies and the demand for fostering a family-friendly environment in the workplace. The survey was conducted in October 2024 (N = 2520). A random selection method was employed to recruit respondents, with the sample designed and implemented proportionally by gender and region of residence. The survey was conducted online, with questionnaire completion taking approximately 15–20 minutes. Respondents were recruited from the online panel of the marketing company OnIN. Among those surveyed, 51% were employed women and 49% employed men; 55% were in registered marriages, and 73% had minor children. The questionnaire included items on the perceived need for employer support for employees with children (in addition to state family and demographic policy measures), as well as a projective block aimed at uncovering the emotional and motivational effects of potentially implementing corporate support measures. The use of projective questions was driven by the hypothesis of low prevalence of such practices in Russian enterprises and allowed for the identification of latent societal demand. The key analytical question of this phase is: Does a demand exist within Russian society for the formation of a family-friendly environment in the sphere of work?

In-depth interviews with employers and officials (qualitative phase). The second part of the study involved a thematic analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with business representatives (N = 60). The sample was formed using purposive selection, taking into account company location and size, as well as the presence or absence of support measures for employees with children. The sample included private companies from the small, medium, and large business segments across various economic sectors, encompassing industry, construction, agriculture, trade, services, IT, finance, education, and healthcare. Respondents included business owners, CEOs, and heads of HR departments. Sample size was determined by reaching thematic saturation in the data. Interviews were conducted between May and October 2025, with durations ranging from 35 to 90 minutes. All interviews were recorded, transcribed using the speech2text.ru service, and manually verified. Data analysis was performed using NVivo software, applying thematic coding procedures. The key research question for this phase is: Is the business prepared to participate in implementing family-friendly policy, and what are the institutional mechanisms for such participation?



The third part of the study is based on *a thematic analysis of in-depth interviews* with regional officials responsible for implementing family and demographic policy and for interacting with the business community (N = 20). Sample construction was carried out via administrative access, whereby official requests were submitted to relevant ministries and departments, inviting them to participate in the study. This phase aimed to analyze the institutional mechanisms for engaging businesses in family-friendly policy, as well as to assess their effectiveness and limitations. The key research question for this phase is: What are the institutional constraints on business-state interaction?

Prior to all interviews in the second and third phases, respondents were informed of the study's aims and objectives, and written consent for participation and data processing was obtained. All questionnaires and interview guides were approved by the ethics committee of the School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship at Ural Federal University.

In the concluding part of the article, the role of civil society in disseminating family-friendly policy is analyzed. The comparison of quantitative and qualitative data revealed discrepancies and points of convergence between public expectations, corporate practices, and state policy orientations. The current and potential roles of non-profit organizations (business associations and parental NGOs) operating in the sphere of family and demographic policy were examined. Within the study, NGOs are considered as institutionally embedded mediators capable of ensuring coordination in the context of regulated civil space, articulating interests, and institutionalizing dialogue among employees, businesses, and the state.

Results

Demand for a family-friendly environment

An overwhelming majority of surveyed employees believe employers should provide "some special form of" support for workers with children. This view is held by 82% of respondents, and this opinion shows no statistically significant variation based on gender, age, parental status, or number of children. At the same time, at the moment of the survey, the most common practice in Russia — providing New Year's gifts of sweets to employees' children — was available to only 25% of respondents. The most common financial measure was a one-time payment related to childbirth, accessible to a mere 14% of working individuals.

The feelings that arise in an employee when an employer implements family-friendly policies are linked to the opportunity, with the employer's support, to complete the vision of a family-oriented environment. Specifically, respondents cited reducing work-family tension (32% of those surveyed), seeing prospects for



professional development (increasing the employee's value to the employer — 22%; reducing the fear of job loss — 16%) and a “parental career” (easing the difficulty of parental labor — 22%; orientation toward having more children — 17%), and strengthening a sense of confidence in their own future (29%). Overall, this can be interpreted as the employer's inclusion, through implementing family-friendly policy, in the process of forming a kind of family-oriented space. This space is organized to support, strengthen, and protect employees' families, thereby contributing to the birth and development of their children.

Business readiness to participate in family-friendly policy

The majority of companies in the sample do not feature formalized programs supporting employees with children. Assistance is provided upon request; it is situational and personalized, and depends on management's stance and the company's current capabilities. Decisions are made at the level of the HR department or organizational leadership without being codified in corporate documents. This approach allows employers to maintain flexibility but simultaneously limits the reproducibility and sustainability of support measures.

Everything is individual, based on a specific request. If someone approaches us, we always respond, listen, and if there's any possibility to help, we always help. (Medium business, Kaliningrad)

Some respondents, primarily representing large businesses, view support measures for employees' families as a tool for long-term personnel strategy. In these cases, family-friendly practices are associated with building loyalty, retaining staff, and developing the employer brand. Family support is perceived as an investment in human capital and the company's future. However, employers themselves emphasize that such an approach is only possible with a certain business scale and stable financial standing. Representatives of small and medium businesses more frequently note that they lack the resources for the systematic implementation of such measures and limit themselves to individual decisions in specific situations.

We operate in consolidation with the state, and a key area of interaction with the Social Fund of Russia involves expanding healthcare opportunities [for company employees] across various fields. (Large business, Magnitogorsk)

We have a collective agreement; for each [family support] program, there is a separate document. We always publish information about the programs in an open space so that families can also see it. (Large business, Cherepovets)



In virtually all interviews, business participation in supporting employees' families was viewed through the lens of economic efficiency. Employers believe that any social measures undergo internal evaluation in terms of costs, risks, and potential returns. In the absence of obvious financial benefits, such initiatives are not perceived as a priority. Even when expressing a positive attitude toward the idea of supporting families with children, respondents pointed to the necessity of compensatory mechanisms from the state. The most frequently mentioned were tax incentives, subsidies, or informational (image-building) promotion for the business. However, experiences with existing subsidies were often described as negative due to complex procedures and high transaction costs, which reduce business motivation to participate.

For an entrepreneur, economic efficiency is needed first and foremost. Any measures aimed at social aspects of a company's life still pass through a filter of, let's say, assessing their economic impact first. (Medium business, Yekaterinburg)

A significant portion of employers adheres to the position that issues of family support and demography belong primarily to the sphere of state responsibility. In this logic, the role of business is limited to providing stable employment, officially declared wages, and compliance with labor legislation. Additional support measures are seen as optional and dependent on the company's goodwill.

Business already participates: a decent salary, a white salary, full payments. The rest is discretionary. The state should provide more support, after all, businesses pay taxes. (Medium business, Novosibirsk)

Simultaneously, the interviews reveal a demand for clearer coordination mechanisms between the state and business. Respondents point to a deficit of understandable rules, programs, and channels for interaction that would allow integrating companies' efforts into the overall demographic policy without significant losses to their economic sustainability.

Yes, of course, business should also participate in this; only, perhaps, the rules of the game for business should be clear first. (Small business, Yekaterinburg)

It's possible, but a specific program is needed that we could apply, because all actions concerning families and children are obvious. When people come with personal issues, we always try to help and resolve them. That's why all these years we've been resolving issues precisely in this manner [on a case-by-case, ad hoc basis]. So, perhaps, if some directive were issued that we could work with and consider, and from which, naturally, the enterprise would also receive some bonuses, then perhaps it would be applicable. (Small business, Chelyabinsk)



Overall, the data allow for the conclusion that for a significant portion of employers, supporting employees' families does not exist as a formalized area of policy. Only some owners of large businesses, who have access to government demographic initiatives and specialized information, view family-friendly policy systematically. For the majority of other enterprises, state initiatives in this sphere are perceived as lying outside the business domain. At the same time, business owners recognize the need to support employees with children and undertake targeted measures to do so. The key problem lies not in a lack of the business's value-based readiness to implement family-friendly policy, but in a deficit of clear mechanisms for inclusion in these programs and an uncertainty regarding the business's niche. NGOs, business associations, or other structures capable of aggregating company interests and building dialogue with the state do not explicitly feature in employers' responses. However, a clear demand is recorded for functions traditionally associated with the third sector: developing template solutions, providing consultancy support, facilitating dialogue, and institutionalizing business participation in family-friendly policy. Thus, the qualitative data point to a structural gap in the state-business interaction system, which could be filled by actively involving non-profit organizations as mediators and coordinators of family-friendly policy.

Institutional constraints on state-business interaction

In expert interviews, regional officials emphasize the demographic effect of family-friendly policy, reflecting state concern over low birth rates. They highlight the structural nature of demographic processes and the impossibility of rapid correction through administrative measures. Demographic dynamics are described as the result of long-term trends, primarily population age structure and the postponement of first births. Officials note a decline in the absolute number of births alongside a relative increase in the share of third and subsequent children, explained by both a demographic "wave" and the effects of previously introduced support measures. In this context, corporate measures are viewed as one of several supplementary tools capable of influencing the decisions of specific groups of workers.

This work is very long and meticulous; it's not immediate. And for now, it's still mostly large businesses that are aware of these metrics and interested in them — it's for their image within their specific professional market. As for small businesses, they are only just getting involved. And they, of course, often ask: Why should we do this? We don't yet see understanding, but I think it's all within our capabilities if we maintain contact and interaction. (Representative of regional public administration, Omsk).

Analysis of the interviews demonstrates that the family-friendly policy system is characterized by a diffusion of responsibility among executive authorities. Formally,



the key role is assigned to ministries of social affairs; however, in practice, the tasks and functions of interacting with business are distributed among several departments without stable coordination mechanisms. It is also important that these actors often have opposing objectives. (As one expert stated, they must maneuver between the need to increase the effectiveness of business family-friendly programs and the requirement to reduce spending in this area. Additional tension is created by the inclusion of social and demographic indicators in the KPI system for top officials — namely, regional governors. Without expanding management tools, this increases pressure at the regional level. Under these conditions, interaction with business often takes on a situational and personalized character, dependent on specific enterprises and the personal engagement of their leaders.

Our ministry [of social protection] has turned into some kind of magicians — we help everyone, but people generally forget that we are designed for those who are in a bad way. But everyone expects help from us. This is both the credit of our leadership and our curse. In reality, this needs to be coordinated so that the entire system works as a complex. (Representative of regional public administration, Novosibirsk).

Regional officials generally believe business can play an important role in family-friendly policy; however, this potential is linked predominantly with large enterprises, often with state participation or integrated into regional industrial infrastructure. Small and medium businesses are viewed as less involved and less motivated.

Large enterprises are interested, of course. Firstly, to mitigate staff turnover. That is, favorable conditions for the family, for that employee's children, are important so that they stay and don't try to leave. (Representative of regional public administration, Kemerovo).

A separate problem acknowledged is the absence of a common language between the state and business, leading to fragmented measures and hindering the scaling of successful corporate practices. The interviews articulate a need for institutions capable of ensuring coordination among the state, business, and society. A special place in this architecture is assigned to non-profit organizations, which, in the officials' view, possess greater flexibility and access to families and workers than government bodies.

Unified approaches are needed for everyone; that is, a single concentration of all information. (Representative of regional public administration, Kemerovo).

Public organizations are specific in that they can enter that family, that situation, when government bodies cannot help the family. That's where our constant interaction happens. (Representative of regional public administration, Omsk).



Sitting here, we don't always know the problem from the inside. We need feedback and a response from the population. Moreover, the responses of different population groups vary greatly. That is, some face certain difficulties, others face different ones. (Representative of regional public administration, Saint Petersburg).

Thus, there is a demand from officials for intermediaries capable of translating state priorities into a format understandable to business, aggregating worker demands, reducing the level of distrust between actors, and supporting the implementation of corporate practices in the sphere of family-friendly policy. Informants speak directly and indirectly about the existence of gaps in the “worker — state — business” system. This institutional gap creates space for the inclusion of NGOs as mediators between the state, the corporate sector, and workers.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the empirical analysis show that the main barrier to the development of family-friendly policy in Russia is not a lack of interest from business or the state, but the weak connectivity between the key actors in the process. Employers demonstrate limited readiness to participate in family-friendly policy, primarily due to unclear mechanisms for inclusion. Government bodies, in turn, face pressure from social and demographic performance targets while lacking the tools and platforms for interaction with business. Both sides experience a deficit of feedback from workers. The situation resembles the children's game, where a message from one participant reaches another in an altered, sometimes distorted, form. The existing architecture of interaction between the state, business, and workers in the sphere of family-friendly policy is schematically presented in Figure 1. The role of civil society organizations is presented as that of a potential moderator between the key participants (the first paragraph on page 80).

In our view, civil society organizations are capable of performing a mediating function between the state, business, and workers. Due to its relative distance from each of the participants, the third sector potentially occupies a central position, facilitating the decoding and translation of interests, expectations, and regulatory requirements among the various actors.

As the interview analysis demonstrated, interactions between business and the state are situational and personalized, dependent on specific companies and the personal engagement of individual leaders. Workers remain on the periphery of the family-friendly policy formation process: Their demand for parental support is articulated through individual strategies and is not converted into collectively represented demands.

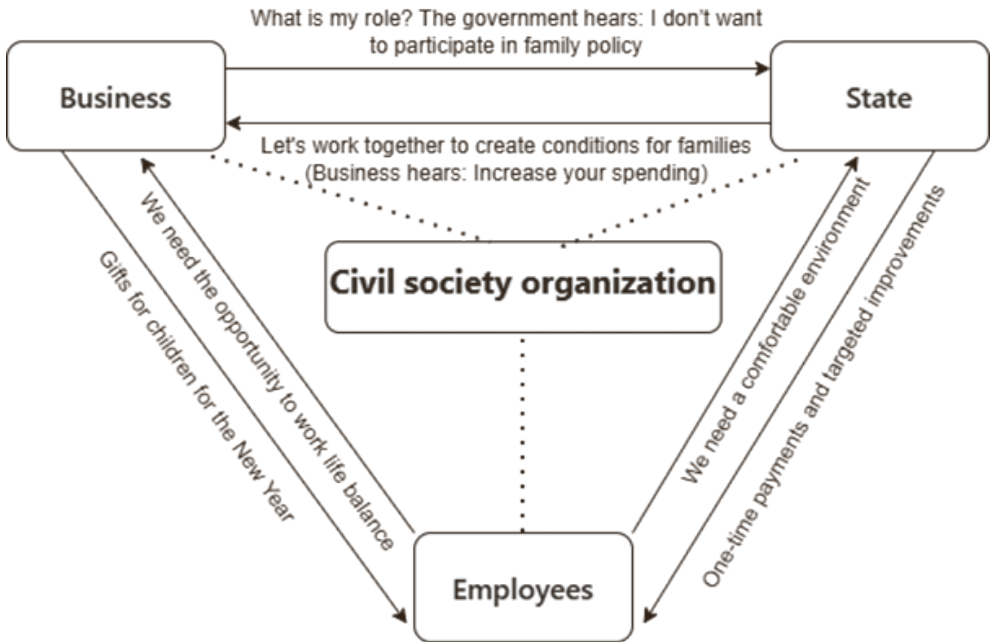


Fig. 1. Civil Society Organizations as a Potential Moderator of Interaction Between the State, Business, and Workers in the Sphere of Family-Friendly Policy

Within this configuration, civil society organizations seem to have the potential for implementing several functions. Firstly, they can aggregate the demands of workers and families, transforming individual expectations into a public agenda comprehensible to the state and business. Secondly, business associations and socially oriented NGOs, possessing extensive experience working with families, can act as “translators” of the state demographic agenda into the language of corporate practices, reducing uncertainty for companies and proposing standard models of participation. Thirdly, through coordination mechanisms, such organizations can create a space for dialogue and trust, which is currently absent in the direct interactions between the state and business.

Discussing the mediating role of the third sector requires clarifying that it cannot be reduced to a single type of “ideal” intermediary without accounting for the cultural-historical context. Contemporary research demonstrates that the mediating roles of NGOs are closely tied to the specific nature of state-civil society relations and therefore elude universal classification (Eitan, Levi-Faur & Tosun, 2025). In the context under study, it is appropriate to speak of a spectrum of mediating positions: (1) relatively autonomous organizations; (2) state-embedded structures that operate through public and advisory councils and perceive themselves as intermediaries between authorities and citizens (Dyakova, Trakhtenberg, 2019); (3) professional associations functioning within the logic of social partnership. The capacity of organizations to act as mediators is determined not only by their degree of autonomy but also by their legitimacy and



recognition among interaction participants, as confirmed by comparative studies of the third sector (Küçük & Arslan, 2024). Table 1 provides examples of operating non-profit organizations that could perform the role of administrator for family-friendly policy, along with their potential functions, the moderating components of which correspond fairly closely to the established Russian context.

Table 1. Examples of Russian Non-Profit Organizations in the Sphere of Family and Business: Potential for Developing Existing Areas of Activity to Support Family-Friendly Policy

NGO	Region	Existing Areas of Activity	Potential Activity within the Existing Focus	Potential Project Names for Grant Applications to the Presidential Grants Foundation
Sverdlovsk Regional Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs	Ural (Yekaterinburg)	Improving the development of corporate social responsibility to strengthen socio-economic stability in the Sverdlovsk region	Developing state family policy by fostering a culture of socially responsible business centered on caring for people and their families; formulating unified approaches, recommendations, and policies to support employees' families, thereby creating a stable and attractive environment for business and life.	"Family Capital": Investing in the Family — Foundation for Sustainable Business
Parents of Siberia	Siberia (Irkutsk)	Social support for families with children	Formulating and promoting family-friendly workplace standards based on a consolidated position of the parenting community.	"The Voice of the Working Parent"
Energy of the City	North-West (Cherepovets)	Improving the city's social situation, implementing socially significant projects and programs	Initiating and moderating dialogue between local self-government bodies, employers, and young audiences, aimed at co-designing programs to address key youth issues — employment, housing, and starting a family.	"Youth Work-Family Balance Audit"

It is important to emphasize that the deficit in civil society organization participation identified in the study is not due to a lack of societal demand for their activities. On the contrary, empirical data rather point to a structural need for intermediary mechanisms that could integrate family-friendly policy into the system of labor relations. The vulnerability of the current model lies in the institutional ambiguity surrounding the status and functions of such organizations: They are not established as mandatory dialogue participants and remain on the periphery of governance processes.



Thus, the analysis conducted allows us to interpret family-friendly policy as a process of forming a new architecture of interactions within the labor market. In this architecture, civil society organizations have the potential to act as a structural node that ensures the connectivity of the system. The absence of this node leads to policy fragmentation, whereas its institutionalization could create the conditions for enabling the inclusion of business in family-friendly policy and for recognizing parenthood as part of workers' career trajectories.

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