

# **Energopolitical Russia: Corporation, State, and the Rise of Social and Cultural Projects**

**Douglas Rogers**, *Yale University*

## ABSTRACT

*In the Perm Region of the Russian Urals, the oil company Lukoil-Perm has worked with regional state agencies to design and administer hundreds of grants for “social and cultural projects” and embarked on other development initiatives over the last 15 years. This article argues that the resulting field of state and corporate power is productively understood as an “energopolitical regime” and suggests ways in which this analytical perspective adds new dimensions to the study of post-Soviet transformations and to the social science of energy and politics more broadly. [Keywords: Energy, oil, state formation, corporate social responsibility, postsocialisms, Russia]*

In 2004, the Children’s Arts School in the city of Berezniki, in the Perm Region of the Russian Urals, received a grant from Lukoil-Perm, the region’s main oil company, for a multifaceted educational program that the organizers called “Unity” (*edinenie*).<sup>1</sup> From May to October, schoolchildren and teachers, along with a number of the city’s library, museum, and house of culture employees, embarked on a wide ranging effort to reacquaint Berezniki with the cultural traditions of the northern Perm Region.

They constructed an electronic “virtual museum” of the area in which Berezniki was located; traveled during the summer vacation months to the neighboring Cherdyn’ district in search of bits of local folklore; held a handicrafts fair that featured everything from ceramics to rugs to belts; and sought to incorporate pieces of traditional culture into the school’s primary teaching streams: choreography, visual arts, and music. All in all, nearly 500 people participated in the public events associated with “Unity” over the project’s six-month run.

After the grant wrapped up, Unity’s organizers reported to Lukoil-Perm not only these basic facts and figures, but also another set of transformations they believed central to the efficacy of the project. Citing a survey and set of interviews they had conducted with schoolchildren and teachers, they wrote:

The children note that, thanks to this project, they were able to study their folk traditions. Participating in the project helped them become kinder, more honest, more responsible, better mannered, and more cultured... The teachers note that, thanks to the project, new personal qualities and possibilities opened up for the schoolchildren: they became more sure of themselves in concert performances, more independent and organized...

Unity, the organizers continued, successfully addressed such important issues as developing children’s aesthetic sensibilities; shaping their personalities; forming civic qualities (*grazhdanskie kachestva*); and fostering independence and responsibility. Of those surveyed, they reported, 95 percent knew that the project was sponsored by Lukoil-Perm.<sup>2</sup>

Given the often embellished style of grant reports—a style shared by reports on the (over)fulfillment of socialist plans—what the students, teachers, and residents of Berezniki really thought about the range of projects sponsored by Lukoil-Perm in 2004 is, to a significant degree, an open question. But it is clear that those writing this report knew what the Lukoil-Perm office in charge of funding grants for “social and cultural projects” wanted to read about: projects focused on reviving traditional culture in a variety of ways; the formation of new kinds of post-Soviet subjects— independent, well-mannered, responsible, civic-minded; and furtherance of the company’s branding, marketing, and corporate social responsibility efforts. The authors of this report would seem to have been quite

persuasive, for Berezniki's Children's Arts School went on to participate in generous grants from Lukoil-Perm in subsequent years, for projects entitled "I Love this Land" and "A Time of Changes."

Berezniki's Unity was by no means exceptional. Indeed, the report that I have excerpted here appears in an archival collection—about which more below—containing materials related to hundreds of such projects spanning the length and breadth of the Perm Region since the early 2000s. Sponsored by Lukoil-Perm, regional state agencies, or some combination thereof, these "social and cultural projects," as they came to be known, supported everything from religious revival (both Christian and Muslim) to ecological awareness, and from anti-narcotics campaigns to youth fashion shows. These projects are a central element, I argue, in a particular kind of energopolitical regime that began to coalesce in the Perm Region following the Russian financial crisis of 1998 and that continued, in various forms, for over a decade.

### **The Perm Region as Energopolitical Regime**

The postsocialist world of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union provides a particularly fruitful context in which to explore energopolitics because almost all forms and vectors of power in this world area have been so rapidly on the move since the 1980s. In this article, I focus on the first decade of the 21st century in Russia, a period roughly corresponding to Vladimir Putin's first two terms as president and the associated reassertion of federal state power. However, I am less concerned with "the state" as such than with what I will term an "energopolitical regime"—a field of power in which state agencies are important but not the sole actors. In the Perm Region, as my opening example from Berezniki begins to demonstrate, Lukoil-Perm has joined state agencies in those classic state projects of molding communities, making citizens, searching for cultural pasts, and transforming subjects. The title of a commentary in one of Lukoil-Perm's reports on its sponsored projects phrased the company's aspiration with respect to the regional state aptly: "Involvement in a Common Affair" (*Soprīchastnost' obshemu delu*) (Lukoil-Perm 2004).

I understand energopolitics to indicate a field of inquiry that goes beyond simply attending to the politics of energy. Following Dominic Boyer (this issue), I see the recent "reawakening" of anthropological interest in energy as offering some new perspectives on human life across a wide

variety of times, places, and theoretical registers. Tracing human interactions with fuel and electricity sources, circuits, and transformations has special potential, Boyer suggests, to supplement anthropology's extensive inquiries into "biopolitics" in a Foucauldian vein—into, that is, the governance of populations and the associated production of certain subjectivities—in the last quarter century. If the study of biopolitics has concerned itself with arrangements of "collective human vitality, morbidity, and mortality" and the "forms of knowledge, regimes of authority, and practices of intervention" (Rabinow and Rose 2006:196) that shape them, then much remains to be said about how all of these elements have been caught up in and conditioned on sources and flows of energy.

Energopolitics, in this register, claims a mandate no less broad than that of biopolitics. In this article, I attend to but one facet of energopolitics: the expansive—and expanding—role played by massive capitalist corporations in the energy sector. More specifically still, I focus on the direct involvement of energy companies in social and cultural development initiatives, a practice that has been on the rise in recent decades, often under the banner of "corporate social responsibility" (CSR). While oil companies like Lukoil have long been major contributors to state budgets through taxes, licensing fees, and royalties, they have recently taken a much more active interest in conceiving, funding, and administering development projects in the locales where they operate. No longer, that is, do energy corporations concern themselves only with producing energy for profit—they have become heavily involved in projects aimed directly at social and cultural transformations.

Grant-based development awards like Berezniki's Unity are part of a global family of CSR initiatives concentrated in the energy and extractive industries.<sup>3</sup> This corporate movement into what was, not so long ago, more firmly the domain of the developmentalist state is at once a significant aspect of contemporary energopolitics and a particularly fruitful terrain for exploring the ways in which attention to energopolitics can extend theories of biopolitics. Many of the Perm Region's social and cultural projects, including Berezniki's Unity, might be approached through a biopolitical lens as producing new ways of governing post-Soviet populations and subjects, as shifting what Rabinow and Rose call the "strategies and contestations over problematizations of collective human vitality" (2006:196). What, though, if we also took note of the ways in which these projects were very much part of the operations of an energy corporation,

wrapped tightly in Lukoil-Perm's relationship with Russian state agencies and its primary project of pumping oil onto global energy markets?

In focusing on corporate dimensions of energopolitics, I seek to draw attention to fields and dynamics of Putin-era post-Soviet power that are not exclusively, or even primarily, about "the state." I nevertheless take some inspiration from a particular strand of social science theory about the state, one that emphasizes states' aspirations to be meta-coordinators, authorizers, and regulators across domains of social and cultural life (see, e.g., Steinmetz 1999:11-12, Bourdieu 1999). From this perspective, states are neither natural nor fully coherent, and, indeed, much of their apparent naturalness and coherence must be constantly projected and shored up—and at certain historical junctures almost entirely rebuilt—through a process generally referred to as "state formation." My claim is that the Perm Region in the 2000s points to ways in which it is preferable to think of the formation of a postsocialist energopolitical regime rather than a postsocialist state.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, we might see that modern state formation as a whole—postsocialist and otherwise—represents only one instance of the much broader category of energopolitical regime formation across the arc of human history. My purpose here, however, is far more limited: I show how one particular energopolitical regime emerged through the channeling and institutionalization of state and corporate aspirations to coordinate, authorize, orchestrate, and fund multiple and quite diverse transformations of social and cultural life in a single Russian region.

Some of the utility of this approach becomes evident when considered alongside two existing strands of scholarship concerning post-Soviet Russia. On the one hand, a massive literature considers relationships between the energy sector and the resurgent institutions of the Russian state. As befits its near-exclusive provenance in political science and economics, this literature has focused on questions of resource rents, tax and regulation policy, struggles between Kremlin factions and oligarchs at the "commanding heights" of the Russian political economy, and the implications of all of this for political (especially democratic) possibilities (see, for example, Goldman 2008, Gustafson 2012). On the other hand, a body of scholarship led by anthropologists and their fellow travelers has deployed a wide range of analytical tools—from Foucauldian biopolitics to consumption theory, from media studies to medical anthropology—to elucidate the ways in which new kinds of subjects and communities are being formed in a variety of specific contexts.<sup>5</sup>

Energopolitics, as I employ it here, offers not a bridge between these two bodies of scholarship—each of which comes with its own internal assumptions and articulated theories about the workings of power—but, rather, “an alternative genealogy of modern power...that rethinks political power through the twin analytics of electricity and fuel...[and] the energo-material transferences and transformations incorporated in all other sociopolitical phenomena” (Boyer this issue). Tracing the emergence of a particular kind of energopolitical regime in the Perm Region in the 2000s, I argue, permits us to see the ways in which the intersection of state agencies and a private energy corporation on the field of social and cultural development projects has set important conditions of possibility for all manner of transformations, ranging from the shifts in tax policies of interest to political scientists to the community- and subject-shaping technologies more commonly analyzed by anthropologists and cultural sociologists.

Thinking about energopolitics in this way requires a source base that illuminates moments where Lukoil-Perm and state agencies sought to orchestrate projects across multiple parts of the Perm Region and multiple domains of social and cultural life. Fond 1206, “Social and Cultural Projects Realized in the Perm Region,” housed at the Perm Region’s State Archive of Contemporary History (PermGANI), is one such source. In the 2000s, the director of PermGANI, an energetic and well-respected young historian determined to catalog new political processes in the region, approached Lukoil-Perm to ask whether the company would contribute a portion of their files related to social and cultural projects to the archive. They agreed. Separately, and in a more standard transfer of documents originating in regional state offices and ministries, the director also acquired the papers of the regional state administration’s sponsored social and cultural projects. The files were not yet fully organized and open to researchers at the time of my primary fieldwork, but it is clear that the director and his specialists have made the determination that these separate acquisitions are part of the same historical moment and process, and, indeed, the descriptions the archive has issued to date move seamlessly between state administration and Lukoil-Perm projects as related aspects of what they term a single “trend” (*napravlenie*), and what others with whom I spoke simply called a “movement” (*dvizhenie*).<sup>6</sup> The very organization of this archive, in other words, points usefully to some of the interfaces that comprise the energopolitical regime I am describing.

The argument that follows is based on extensive work in this archive; formal interviews and informal conversations with key players who moved in and through Lukoil-Perm and state administration circles at the time; and the reflections, tales, and gossip of a much broader circle of contacts in the Perm Region built up over nearly two decades. I focus on some rather bureaucratic issues: the composition of committees and commissions; the ways in which problems in the social sphere were defined and solutions devised; and the manner in which state and corporate funds were combined, carefully separated, and allocated. These structural elements in the assembly of an energopolitical regime take on uncommon significance in the Russian case, where large-scale institutions like states and corporations were being rapidly built after a decade of near collapse in the 1990s and had not yet achieved the status of routine operations or taken-for-granted flows of money and power. These sources, methods, and topics do not afford precise insight into what kinds of subjects or communities were being created through the Perm Region's rapidly proliferating social and cultural projects and other development initiatives. They do, however, demonstrate how a particular energopolitical regime became a central condition of possibility for nearly all of those projects—as Unity's organizers well understood.

### **The Rise of Social and Cultural Projects**

Most of my interlocutors dated the era of social and cultural projects in the Perm Region to a late 1990s conjuncture of economic crisis and international NGOs. "Really," I was told by one insider, "it all came together because of the patronage and financial collaboration of the Eurasia Foundation." The Eurasia Foundation was created with funding from the US Agency for International Development in 1993 and was active in efforts to create "civil society" across much of the former Soviet Union. It entered into a collaborative agreement with the Perm city government in 1997 to design a structure of grant competitions through which funds might be allocated for projects designed by non-state actors in Perm. From the perspective of Perm's mayor Iurii Trutnev and his team, this partnership was useful because it eliminated some pressure on the regional budget—pressure that increased exponentially following the crash of 1998—and, at the same time, made a name for Perm in the field of building civil society with international collaborators. Allocating scarce state funds for social

programs according to the rankings of an external panel of experts was also a useful, if not always successful, way to attempt to divert citizens' ire at governmental officials.

In their first years, these competitions funded a range of initiatives in the city of Perm, quickly extending from the non-governmental sector to include low-level state organizations as grant recipients as well. Funding came from the Eurasia Foundation and, to a lesser extent, the Perm City municipal government. In 2000, Trutnev was elected governor of the entire Perm Region and moved, together with most of his staff, from the city government offices down the road to the regional government offices, where they quickly became responsible for administering a much larger, more complex social and cultural sphere than just the city of Perm. With a couple of years of experience administering social and cultural grant competitions behind them, Trutnev's team sought to bring this budgeting practice to the region as a whole. They continued to work with the Eurasia Foundation on these projects, becoming a regular participant in a series of "Social Projects Fairs" (*iarmarky sotsialnykh proektov*) that moved around the major cities of the Volga Federal District. At these fairs and exhibitions, organizations that had received grants and the government officials designing and administering them mingled and exchanged strategies and information. Under his governorship, Trutnev declared shortly after his election in 2000, the Perm Region would become the "capital of civil society" in Russia—an ambitious claim at the end of a decade in which civil society featured as a buzzword in reforms across the length and breadth of the former Soviet bloc.

Trutnev's move from the mayoralty of Perm to the governorship of the entire Perm Region also brought with it the importance of coming to terms with powerful region-wide corporations like Lukoil-Perm.<sup>7</sup> Lukoil-Perm had its own interest in attending to the population—chiefly, tamping down critiques of its growing wealth and reversing the public perception that it was a major polluter and environmental hazard (on these points, see Rogers 2012). The company also needed ongoing access to the region's oilfields, and local officials in these districts were demanding development projects in exchange. These officials had a strong hand to play, for, unlike some industries, the oil industry requires access to very specific sites for its wells, rigs, and pipelines. With oil deposits in fixed locations and in short supply (many of the Perm Region's deposits were running dry after decades in production), it was not possible for Lukoil-Perm simply



to focus on other districts, or to play politicians and the communities they represent off each other. In response to these potential obstacles, Andrei Kuziaev, head of Lukoil-Perm at the time, began putting together a “Connections with Society” division of the company that would be tasked with managing relationships with state agencies and local populations in ways that would facilitate the company’s extraction plans. As it turned out, some of the division’s first projects would be helping to shape the region’s procedures for administering social and cultural projects.

The direct involvement of the Eurasia Foundation gradually declined and then ceased, but its grant-based procedures remained and became central to the coalescing energopolitical regime. As international agencies withdrew from the Perm Region, and Russia as a whole, Lukoil-Perm stepped in to the place they had vacated.<sup>8</sup> In 2002, the Perm Regional government put together a commission to oversee the allocation of grants for social and cultural projects. T. I. Margolina, Governor Trutnev’s deputy for social issues and a moving force behind the social projects during the team’s tenure in Perm City government, headed the commission. She herself had three deputies on the commission: V. V. Abashev, a literature professor, who was head of a highly regarded and culturally-focused NGO dedicated to the Perm Region; P. I. Blus’, the head of the governor’s social projects office (*apparat*) who would directly manage the administration of the grants; and I. V. Marasanova, identified as “head of the division of social technologies in the department of social management at ZAO Lukoil-Perm” (Perm Regional Administration et al. 2002:64). Beneath these three deputies were some 33 commissioners who would participate in the process of awarding grants after experts had evaluated the proposals. These commission members hailed from every corner of the social and cultural sphere in the Perm Region, from the state Department of Culture to non-governmental musical groups; from the director of the region’s AIDS prevention department to the interim head of the ecological protection agency; from representatives of newspapers and small businesses to the directors and deputy directors of several mid-sized regional businesses (Perm Regional Administration et al. 2002:64-66).<sup>9</sup> Many were the present and former colleagues of those submitting the grant applications, whether through Soviet-era Communist Party or Komsomol connections or through alliances forged in the turbulent 1990s.

This organizational structure, with representatives from the regional state administration and Lukoil-Perm at the top and a full spread of other

institutions arrayed beneath, was a foundational moment that was replicated in many ways and across many domains as the 2000s progressed. It is, like the organization of PermGANI's archive, nicely indicative of the shape of the energopolitical regime of the Perm Region as it grew out of the foreign and NGO-funding that characterized the 1990s. As Iurii Trutnev made clear, these projects were to be a signature element of his governorship—a wide range of businesses contributed modest financing, and pressure from his office helped make good on the overall effort's promise to create a partnership between state agencies and business. But Lukoil-Perm stood out in several ways that underscore the utility of attending to the emergence of an “energopolitical regime” rather than a state. Most notably, beyond just contributing a deputy commissioner and financing to the overall effort, the company reserved the right to advertise its own nomination categories, to select the winners in those categories, and to fund the resulting projects. The first set of grant recipients under the overall social and cultural projects umbrella included groups planning to do everything from publishing a youth newspaper to holding an interreligious dialogue on the topic of “The Culture of Toleration,” and from planting flower gardens outside a local school to running an anti-drug use program called “High without Narcotics.”<sup>10</sup> Lukoil-Perm focused its own subset of inaugural awards on a single category: the revival of traditional folk handicrafts in selected rural oil-producing districts (see also Rogers 2014).

Already by 2003, both sides found the complexity of this relationship somewhat cumbersome, and Lukoil-Perm set out on its own, designing and administering an entirely separate competition that focused only on the districts of the Perm Region in which the company had operations. It was Lukoil-Perm's corporate competition, for instance, that awarded the “Unity” grant to Berezniki's school. Despite this organizational parting of the ways, however, the overall field of energopolitics continued to coalesce in multiple ways, not least of which was the fact that both state and corporate competitions began asking the organizations applying for grants to seek co-financing. In many cases, especially for those located in oil-producing districts, this meant submitting applications to both state and Lukoil-Perm competitions.

One of the ways in which regional state agencies and Lukoil-Perm's own social and cultural project competitions continued to work in concert after parting organizational ways was in training. Writing grants was, after all, an entirely new experience for librarians, veterans, museum workers, low-level

state organizations, and scores of other groups who had been recipients of state subsidies. Seminars on grant-writing and project administration were ubiquitous in those early years and eventually led to the publication of a how-to manual entitled *The Road to a Social Project: Practical Advice for Beginners* (Shabanova 2004; see also Perm Regional Administration 2004). This guide emphasized the importance of practical knowledge of the entire grant process and took beginners (in exhaustive detail) through a number of steps, from assembling a team to identifying a project and its goals; putting together a plan; setting goals and achievable results; finding the required co-financing from other organizations; budgeting and auditing; and reporting. Although this guide was published by the regional state administration, it was actively used by Lukoil-Perm, and Lukoil-Perm employees recalled giving almost precisely the same advice to applicants.

Attending to a couple points elaborated in *The Road to a Social Project* sheds some useful light on the Perm Region's energopolitical regime. One important question, frequently posed from all quarters in those early years, was: what, exactly, is a social project and what does it do? *The Road to a Social Project* defines a "social project" in its glossary as "a means of social creativity...connected with the solution to some sort of problem. [A social project] changes the original situation in a social system" (Shabanova 2004:9). The booklet then goes on to specify precisely how state agencies and non-profit groups should go about finding a problem to solve:

The beginning of project activity is connected to the discovery of a difficulty, a discomfort in one's everyday surroundings. By "difficulty," we mean direct discomfort, dissatisfaction, that which doesn't suit a person in his or her social life...It is very important at this stage not to confuse the "social problem" and its visible consequences. For example, having seen piles of garbage that have not been picked up, do not formulate the problem as a problem of garbage. That is just the consequence. In fact, the problem can be one of the following:

- a) A low level of professionalism among representatives of local state agencies
- b) Absence of a program of ecological education (*vospitanie*) in school and non-school education
- c) A low level of general culture among the population of the particular location, and so on. (2004:17)

Beginners are then counseled to do further research to identify the problem more precisely, by talking to townspeople, researching in the library, finding out whether other organizations in their locality are also working on the problem, and so on. They should work to situate their project in broader problems that they know from this research to be affecting the world, region, or locality. The section ends by reiterating: “the level of the project should be realistic! Don’t describe global problems, if their solution is beyond your reach!” (2004:20).

The ways in which people work through “difficulties” or “discomforts” in their “everyday surroundings” is central to a great deal of anthropological scholarship on postsocialist transformations. In many cases, this scholarship works from a particular context—women’s organizations in Tver (Hemment 2007) or an HIV/AIDS treatment and drug rehabilitation clinic in St. Petersburg (Zigon 2011), to give but two examples that would fall readily under the Perm Region’s social and cultural projects rubric—and builds on a particular strand of theory to help understand transformations of subjects or communities (feminist anthropology in Hemment’s case, the anthropology of morality in Zigon’s). Thinking through the theoretical lens of energopolitics in the Perm Region allows us a different perspective. It permits us to locate and chart the interaction of hundreds of such instances within a broader field of authorization, legitimation, and meta-coordination defined and managed at the intersection of state agencies and an oil company. Through the Perm Region’s social and cultural grant competitions, all problems and all agencies were, at least potentially, of the same basic shape. All could compete with each other for scarce corporate and state funds, and were most likely to be successful if they defined and attempted to solve problems in ways that fit with the preferred goals and language of those administering the funds. In the Perm Region in the 2000s, this energopolitical regime comprised, to a significant (although hardly exclusive) extent, the very field on which all manner of transformations could be legitimately contemplated, funded, and executed.

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Following their heyday in the early and mid-2000s, social and cultural projects in corporate and state corners of the energopolitical field began to drift slowly apart. Lukoil-Perm’s social and cultural project competitions continued and expanded, and in 2012 celebrated their tenth anniversary. They became, as one person put it to me, “the face of Lukoil

in the region.” However, after the appointment of Oleg Chirkunov to replace Iurii Trutnev as governor in 2004, state funding for regional social and cultural projects through a centralized grant competition of the sort designed under Trutnev wavered and then stopped altogether—much to the frustration of the experts who had built it and believed it to be a success. Governor Chirkunov, they said, was a full-scale *liberal* (liberal; read: neoliberal) who believed the state should not be in the business of helping anyone with their projects. What the Perm Region needed most, (they said) he believed, was more entrepreneurs, and especially social entrepreneurs, who could work on these projects without state help and with the overall goal of making a profit.

### **Manipulable Resources Redux: The 24-20 Tax Program and Regional Infrastructure**

Although Governor Oleg Chirkunov slowly put a stop to state funding for social and cultural projects through the mechanism of grant competitions, he was a supporter of reducing taxes as a method of enticing corporations to invest in the Perm Region. In the mid-2000s, Russian tax law allowed regions to reduce the amount of the tax on business income they collected, as an incentive for businesses to stay in their region and to spur reinvestment. The Perm Region responded by reducing its corporate income tax rate from the standard 24 percent to 20 percent for all businesses. Although the tax cut incentive applied across the board, it made the most difference for the region’s two major tax payers: Uralkali, the potash fertilizer mining operation in the Perm Region’s north, and Lukoil-Perm.

The fact that Lukoil-Perm was a subsidiary in a vertically integrated holding company left some ambiguity about whether those savings would actually stay in the region or be transferred up the corporate chain to Moscow-based “big Lukoil.” In part as an effort to ensure that this did not happen, Chirkunov’s administration sought to negotiate a comprehensive agreement with Lukoil-Perm that covered all of the company’s operations in the region, including agreements on precisely how the tax savings would be spent.<sup>11</sup> Lukoil-Perm had its own interests in this special arrangement: as the only company in the Perm Region that entered into special agreement with the regional state apparatus, it gained peerless and ongoing access to the top levels of the regional administration. As part of the five-year agreement, the two sides agreed that, in any given

year, half of the company's regional tax savings would go to Lukoil-Perm's own reinvestments in the Perm Region, including roads, pipelines, office buildings, and other necessary infrastructure (including modernizing in ways that would improve the company's ecological footprint). The other half would go to social and cultural development projects—over and above the amount that was already being spent through the company's growing grant competitions. These new projects, however, would not be decided on through open competitions, but by direct, annual negotiations between Lukoil-Perm and the governor's office. Once each year over the five-year agreement, Vagit Alekperov, President of Lukoil, made a visit to the Perm Region to sign the corporation's yearly agreement with Governor Oleg Chirkunov. Plans for that year's four percent savings on income tax were included in the signed agreements.

In 2008, the third year of this agreement, Lukoil-Perm's four percent savings on its income taxes constituted 1.5 billion rubles, or roughly \$60 million USD, leaving half for reinvestment in the region's oil industry and half for social and cultural development projects. "That is *big* money," said one person I spoke with who knew some of the details of these negotiations but did not participate in them. "You can build small hospitals, new schools, all kinds of things." Indeed, a partial list of the projects that the \$30 million in 2008 went to support includes the construction, reconstruction, or repair of: three fitness and health centers; schools in seven districts; the water and gas infrastructure for several cultural centers; and libraries, clinics, cultural monuments, churches, and mosques up and down the region.

As should be clear from this list, funds from this pot of money were dedicated largely to physical reconstruction, repair, and restoration, rather than to the everyday problem solving, subject formation, and community-building that featured in the annual grant competitions. These capital projects, I was told, were particularly significant and prized by the company because they left a permanent mark on the central spaces of towns and cities, and because they associated Lukoil-Perm directly with a durable infrastructure of schools, hospitals, sports centers, cultural centers, and so on. We find in the 24-20 agreement, then, another facet of the regional energopolitical regime, a way in which Lukoil-Perm was slowly shaping the basic ways in which public space and infrastructure were configured and reconfigured in the Perm Region. These initiatives were, like the social and cultural grants, important channels and conditions of possibility for all manner of political, biopolitical, and other governmental projects.

Notably, the 24-20 policy and its incorporation into the officially signed annual agreements between Lukoil-Perm and the regional state apparatus gave both sides significant extra-budgetary power to shape districts and localities throughout the region. One of the governor's representatives at these meetings told me they were largely amicable (although he certainly had an incentive to say so): "They might come to us and say we want to build two new clubs, one in such-and-such a district and the other over here. We might say back, sure, build two clubs, but we'd like one of them to go in this district." Lukoil-Perm, that is, became central to city and regional planning. This configuration recalls Caroline Humphrey's (1998) identification of "manipulable resources"—those that could be accumulated and circulated outside the official plan—as central to socialist-era political economy. Although the agreement between Lukoil-Perm and the regional state administration was certainly official and public, it recreated a key aspect of the socialist system in that it placed significant resources outside of the budget and subject only to the direct negotiations of the heads of state agencies and enterprises. In the Perm Region of the 2000s, those negotiations were a central aspect of the energopolitical regime.

In his *Post-Soviet Social* (2011), Steven Collier attends closely to the role of energy infrastructure—pipes, heating ducts, power generation plants, and other elements—in the construction of Soviet and post-Soviet cities. Collier's analysis is thoroughly Foucauldian, and he views energy infrastructure as one element in a panoply of technologies that, together, constitute an encompassing and distinctively Soviet biopolitical project whose discursive and material effects lingered long after 1991. I have in mind something analytically different in developing the concept of energopolitics. Rather than seeing energy infrastructures as one domain of a more encompassing biopolitical project, as Collier does, I am suggesting that the Perm Region's energopolitical regime set the conditions for all manner of projects—some usefully understood as biopolitical, some not. In the domain of city planning and construction most on display in the 24-20 project, it was often direct negotiations between Lukoil-Perm and the regional state administration that dictated where the pipelines would go, where the schools would be built, how Soviet-era infrastructures would and could be transformed. Post-Soviet biopolitics of the sort Collier traces was, I would argue, at least partially conditioned on a certain configuration of energopolitics.

Boyer's (this issue) reminder that "biopolitics has always plugged in" applies, then, both to material infrastructures like pipelines and electricity grids and to pools and circuits of capital controlled by powerful corporations in the energy sector. Social and cultural project competitions and the annual 24-20 negotiations were primary channels through which a variety of projects, including some classically biopolitical efforts aimed at shaping subjects and populations, "plugged in" the post-Soviet Perm Region.

### **Conclusion: Cracks and Shifts in Energopolitical Regimes**

The processes that I have described thus far worked in part by creating an energopolitical variant of a "state effect": the power and coherence of the energopolitical field circumscribed by Lukoil-Perm and the regional state apparatus appeared so powerful in part because of the insistent, omnipresent manner in which it presented itself (see Abrams 1988).<sup>12</sup> Invocations of "social partnership" were everywhere, and everything from folk crafts fairs to the regional economic forums dedicated to the future of the Perm region proceeded under the jointly advertised sponsorship of Lukoil-Perm and the regional state administration. Not so far beneath these projections of seamless collaboration in the development and transformation of the region, however, were competing agendas that had been uneasily corralled into provisional alliance. As one state official put it while recalling the beginnings of the social and cultural project movement in the Perm Region: "Everyone had their own mission, and it's hard now [ten years later] to say what emphasis each contributed."

An example taken from a third category of interaction between state agencies and Lukoil-Perm on energopolitical terrain helps to illustrate these simmering tensions. In addition to the social and cultural grants program and the 24-20 agreements, Lukoil-Perm occasionally presented the Perm Region with ad hoc gifts. In 2009, for instance, the company celebrated the 80th anniversary of the discovery of oil in the Perm Region. Nearly everything that Lukoil-Perm sponsored in the region that year—from oil workers' professional holiday in the fall to social and cultural projects—bore not only the usual Lukoil-Perm logo, but also the additional slogan "80 years of Permian oil." The company expressed its desire to give a special gift to the Perm Region as part of this celebratory year and proposed reconstruction of a part of the central "esplanade" area of the city of Perm. Much of the esplanade was in poor repair, including the section that lay between



Lukoil-Perm's own central offices and those of the regional state administration. It was a small scale development project, to be sure, but the space in question was highly symbolic: the contrast between the carefully arranged and scrupulously maintained masonry, grass, and flowerbeds outside Lukoil-Perm's main offices and the scrubby grass and low-quality concrete across the street at the offices of the regional state administration had often been pointed out to me by friends when we walked through the city center. If sleek and well maintained offices were an indication of who was in charge of this energopolitical regime—and to many minds they were—this central area of the city had a ready answer: Lukoil-Perm.

It was, several sources familiar with the negotiations said, a step too far for the state administration to allow Lukoil-Perm to make a contribution to the reconstruction and beautification of Perm right under its own windows—the clear implication would have been that Lukoil-Perm was the senior partner in this state-corporate relationship. The administration made a counterproposal, suggesting that Lukoil-Perm might look a couple blocks down the street to Cathedral Square, a somewhat smaller and less central area of the city, but one that was heavily trafficked as a primary route to the city's walkway along the Kama River. The Russian Orthodox Church, which had only recently reacquired the cathedral from its Soviet-era occupant—the Perm Regional Studies Museum—readily agreed, and the project fit neatly into Lukoil-Perm's many other efforts to sponsor religious revival in the Perm Region.<sup>13</sup> Cathedral Square is now paved in handsome red brick, with neat fences, nests of benches, and a new monument to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. An engraved plaque, roughly two-foot by three-foot, placed at eye level at one end of the square reads: "The Cathedral Square on Sludke Hill was reconstructed and equipped in 2009 as a gift to the city of Perm and the residents of the Perm Region from the oil company 'Lukoil' in honor of the 80th anniversary of the discovery of Permian oil and the Volga-Urals oil and gas province (1929-2009)." The section of the esplanade that Lukoil-Perm offered to reconstruct was left untouched.

Combined with the historical shifts from Trutnev's to Chirkunov's regional administrations discussed above, this brief tale of competing interests underscores the instability and contingency of energopolitical regimes. Although I have focused on a particular conjuncture that occurred largely in the first decade of the 2000s, extending this brand of analysis backward would reveal a quite different configuration. For a time in the mid-1990s, for instance, the energopolitical meta-coordination of different

realms of social and cultural life in the Perm Region was accomplished not through overt social and cultural projects but through the very means of exchange. In 1995, in conditions of widespread demonetization and lack of trust in state-backed rubles, Lukoil-Perm began to issue promissory notes (*veksels*) that could be exchanged for quantities of refined oil products. These notes circulated through the entire region, serving as a quasi-currency for all manner of exchanges, especially the payment of state taxes (cf. Woodruff 1999). Oil-backed *veksels* were the centerpiece of a quite different sort of state-corporate energopolitical regime.

All of these postsocialist transformations may serve as useful windows onto still larger-scale transformations. The global oil boom of the 1970s, for instance, also produced a brand of energopolitics that drew scholarly attention to the relationship between oil and social development projects. As Terry Lynn Karl's *The Paradox of Plenty* (1997) and other works focused on that era have shown, it was almost entirely rent-collecting states—rather than corporations—that sought to “sow the oil” (Coronil 1997) by investing in grand development projects (see also Apter 2005). By contrast, the energopolitics that prevailed in the Perm Region in the 2000s participated in—and, indeed, was designed explicitly to mimic—a worldwide upsurge in the phenomenon of corporations embarking on more directly collaborative relationships with state development agencies and, in some cases, establishing their own efforts to govern local populations. One benefit of turning to study energopolitics, then, is that it allows us to see the state-focused development regimes of the 1970s oil boom, and the very concept of a “petrostate” they produced, as one moment in a longer and ongoing series of transformations.<sup>14</sup> It follows that determining whether or not post-Soviet Russia is a “petrostate”—as so much comparative scholarship has sought to do—may hide from view both local specificities and their connections to shifting energopolitical regimes on a global scale. ■

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### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Lukoil-Perm is a subsidiary of the large Moscow-based holding company Lukoil, Russia’s largest private oil company.

<sup>2</sup>PermGANI f. 1206, unnumbered file, “DSHM im. L.A. Starkova, Virtual’nyi Muzei Istorii Verkhnekam’ia, Korporativnyi Konkurs Sotsial’nykh i Kulturnykh Proektov OOO Lukoil-Perm,” 2004.

<sup>3</sup>On the anthropology of the corporation and, more particularly, the corporate social responsibility movement, see, e.g., Benson and Kirsch (2010), Rajak (2011), and Welker (2009).

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth Dunn (2008) provides a highly instructive account of recent theories of the state as they relate to the postsocialist world. Here, I set aside the many ongoing debates about the nature and scope of “the state” in favor of highlighting the ways in which all of these dimensions and functions can become wrapped up in energetic transformations—in this case, energetic transformations institutionalized into an oil company.

<sup>5</sup>For examples of these specific themes, see Collier (2011), Shevchenko (2008), Rivkin-Fish (2005), and Boyer and Yurchak (2010). For an overview of this large literature, see Rogers and Verdery (2013).

<sup>6</sup>PermGANI f. 1206, op. 1, “Introduction,” 2010.

<sup>7</sup>Although Lukoil-Perm’s main offices and refinery were in the city of Perm, its most lucrative upstream operations were spread throughout the Perm Region’s dozens of districts; Trutnev and his team really only had to reckon with the booming oil industry in a major, systematic way after they moved to regional level.

<sup>8</sup>This was not the case everywhere, of course. Hemment (2012) shows how Kremlin-backed youth groups also became active in the field of “civil society” in the Putin era.

<sup>9</sup>The booklet was authored jointly in 2002 by the Perm Regional Agency for social development, the Urals Center for the Support of Non-Governmental Organizations, and Lukoil-Perm’s Office for State Relations.

<sup>10</sup>PermGANI f. 1206, op. 1, d. 24, “Doklad o realizatsii sotsial’nykh i kul’turnykh proektov v Permskoi oblasti v 2001 g.,” 2001.

<sup>11</sup>This agreement between the Perm Regional administration and Lukoil was, in fact, the third such five-year agreement; earlier agreements had helped codify the parties’ collaborative approach to social and cultural projects.

<sup>12</sup>I do not wish to imply by this formulation that a constructivist approach to the formation of energopolitical regimes is sufficient in and of itself. I am mindful of a range of recent and instructive approaches to the materiality of oil as a natural resource and form of energy (e.g., Barry 2010, Mitchell 2011, Weszkalnys 2011, Richardson and Weszkalnys 2014), and have explored some of the materialities of energopolitics in the Perm Region elsewhere (Rogers 2012).

<sup>13</sup>Indeed, to the extent that Orthodox and Muslim communities in the Perm Region have sought to foster new and revived kinds of spirituality and religious experience in the 2000s, they have often relied on Lukoil-Perm’s support to make their construction projects and associated outreach programs a reality.

<sup>14</sup>On the historical specificity of the concepts of petrostate and resource curse, see also Jones Luong and Weinthal (2010).

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#### Foreign Language Translations:

Energo-political Russia: Corporation, State, and the Rise of Social and Cultural Projects

[**Keywords:** Energy, oil, state formation, corporate social responsibility, postsocialisms, Russia]

Россия энергополитическая: Государство, Корпорация, и Социо-Культурные Проекты

[**Ключевые слова:** энергия, нефть, формирование государств, корпоративная социальная ответственность, пост-социализм, Россия]

Rússia Energopolítica: Corporação, Estado e a Emergência de Projectos Sociais e Culturais

[**Palavras-chave:** Energia, petróleo, formação estatal, responsabilidade social corporativa, pós-socialismos, Rússia]

能源政治观点下的俄罗斯：企业，国家，与社会文化项目的兴起

**关键词：**能源，石油，国家形成，企业的社会责任，后社会主义，俄罗斯

Энергополитическая Россия: Корпорация, государство и становление социальных и культурных проектов

[**Ключевые слова:** энергия, энергетика, становление государства, корпоративная социальная ответственность, постсоциализмы, Россия]

سياسة شركات الطاقة بروسيا: الشركات، الدولة، وازدياد المشاريع الاجتماعية والثقافية  
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