

The specificity of the civil control in the circumstances of polyethnicity of the Russian society: the modernization aspect

Yury Grigorjevich Volkov and Yulia Igorevna Isakova

Southern Russian Branch of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Institute of retraining of Southern Federal University, Pushkinskaya str., 160, Rostov-on-Don, Russia

Abstract. This article deals with the problem of modernization specificity of civil control in the circumstances of polyethnicity of the Russian society and its regional differentiation. Particularly, the Southern region causes the strongest interest, as it is the most versatile in terms of the number of ethnicities, and the most conflictive. It is paid particular attention in this article. The socio-economic situation in the South of Russia requires serious modernization, without which the decrease of conflictogenity of this region and the overcoming of the systemic crisis, which has been taking place during the whole period of post-Soviet transformations, is not possible. However, the importance of civil control institutions for modernization and innovative regional development is often underestimated.

[Volkov Y.G., Isakova Y.I. **The specificity of the civil control in the circumstances of polyethnicity of the Russian society: the modernization aspect.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(7s):401-405] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 85

Keywords: civil control, modernization, regionalization, polyethnicity, civil control institutions

Introduction

The problem of modernization in Russia is the subject of one of the most large-scale scientific discourses, which is mainly obvious in view of the high extent of indefiniteness, which arises when one tries to answer the following questions: what is the direction of modernization of the Russian society, what are its social principles, what is the expected result, and what model acts as the most efficient one for the sociocultural and polyethnic specificity of the Russian society and the state?

The enormous range of scientific works dealing with various aspects of modernization in Russia evidences the fact that this problem is of great scientific interest [1]. It is necessary to define what is understood as modernization in our research, and we are not going to try to provide our own definition of this phenomenon, as we believe that sociology has rather comprehensive definitions of modernization [2], among which we would like to highlight the following ones. Modernization is a process of positive changes of a state and a society based on economic, political, and cultural innovations, and the result of which is the change of the type of its political structure and political organization, improvement of welfare of people, development of culture, science, and technology, as well as protection of environment [3]. It is rather obvious that such modernization and its final results assume systemic nature of social changes in the society and the state, which, taking into account the potential and the complexity of the definition by O.N. Yanitsky, requires appealing to the category of systemic modernization, which is actively used by M.K. Gorshkov in his scientific research. According to his

opinion, modernization is a "qualitative, both horizontal and vertical update of the society covering all spheres of living activities and all levels of organization of the life of state and the society" [4].

In the context of our agenda, the issue of modernization specificity of the civil control in the circumstances of singularities of the sociopolitical system [5] and polyethnicity of the Russian society and its regional specificity becomes the primary one. Particularly, the Southern region causes the strongest interest, as it is the most versatile in terms of the number of ethnicities, and the most conflictive [6]. The socio-economic situation in the South of Russia requires serious modernization, without which the decrease of conflictogenity of this region and the overcoming of the systemic crisis [7], which has been taking place during the whole period of post-Soviet transformations, is not possible. However, the importance of civil control institutions for modernization and innovative regional development is often underestimated.

In the Russian society, as before, the main part of financial and material resources and political and power authorities are as much as possible concentrated in the federal center, and regions both receive power authorization and legislative functions for development of the civilian society and receive financing of their social and investment programs according as a last resort.

At actual incompleteness of municipal reforms, the local power is virtually deprived of its own resources in the circumstances of absence of mechanisms of claiming their interests, and in this view, it can function only as a subordinate part of the uniform bureaucratic mechanism of the state. The

system of administrative subordination has been built during years of Soviet power when economic patterns of development of the Caucasian republics started being obviously cost-based and subsidized. During the post-Soviet time, this system has only been strengthening.

In the modern Russia, there are no unilateral strict and excluding any biased approach rules of rendering financial help with its allocation under a uniform methodology depending on the level of the per capita fiscal capacity of the territories to both subsidized regions of the federation and municipal governments from the upper level budgets.

In this view, the interregional socio-economic inequality increases, the number of bankruptcies of enterprises grows, which results in large-scale reduction of employment. It is associated with the general decay of the industry and agriculture, which is worsened by high regional birth rate and unemployment. Even quick and successful overcoming of stagnation trends existing currently in the economic sphere and caused by the world financial crisis will most probably result in worsening of already existing interregional gap only.

The republics that are most complex in economic terms (Dagestan, Chechnya, and Ingushetia) and the most monoethnic and monoreligious republic in social and demographic terms, which find it difficult to support the existing civilian organizations and develop the civil society, are facing severe socio-economic doldrums. These republics fell behind the country average indexes of the life quality even as far back as in the Soviet times. In 1980, the income of a Chechnya dweller was 2.6 times less than the one of a Muscovite on the average, and by 1991, the difference reached 9.1 times. In 1992, an average Muscovite purchased goods and services for 52,300 rubles, and a dweller of Chechnya – only for 3,300 rubles (that is approximately 17 times less). Currently the gap between the incomes (and expenses) of citizens of Moscow and of the Northern Caucasia is increasing even more [8].

The economic and social dependence is also of reverse nature: the key factor of the development of the civil control institutions is the extent of socio-economic and socio-political development of a region [9]. Usually, in such regions, large industrial production is not developed to a sufficient extent, and the majority of population is employed in agriculture.

In the circumstances of the heavy dependence of the Russian regions (the majority of which are in doldrums and are subsidized) on the rather random federal transfers, it is very easy to manipulate civilian organizations. As a result, even in the post-Soviet time in the regions, particularly those having strong

paternalistic and boss-to-client ethnical traditions and rather "abstract" attitude to the state, when regional officials cannot even think in terms of state interests, as their mentality has initially been programmed for bribery, theft, nepotism, etc., the so-called simulated models of the civil society emerged, which acted in a controlled manner either in support of the regional power or against the federal power.

The political pressure of regional civilian organizations (the orientation of which is also strongly dependent on the ethnodemographic structure of the region and especially of the elites at power) has become a significant political factor of interrelations between regional powers and the federal center. Regional authorities, which are not able to detect ethnic and interethnic contradictions emerging in the society and find efficient ways to solve urgent or structural issues, it is very beneficial to maintain puppet civilian organizations (even based on ethnic or nationalist principles), using which they always could politically urge federal authorities to allocate money from the state budget through showing them organized collective actions in squares urging payment of salaries to state employees or solution of other social problems in regional and federal mass media.

In the regions, it took little time for the zone of servility to appear, which means that certain puppet social activists and volunteers of the power, i.e. appropriate tripartite commissions, services, and committees dealing with settlement of existing social issues and contradictions and issues related to labor via collective agreements, are accommodated around the authoritarian local or regional powers or business structures. Such organizations, councils, and committees are more often given comfortable and spacious premises located in central districts at very low rental rates. They actively participate in and usually win various competitions for grant schemes of support of initiative social projects in certain categories and out-of-competition government and municipal social order and initiatives as a form of implementation of dedicated social programs, which are a total of governmental (municipal) contracts for implementation of works or rendering services at the expense of the state budget. Such projects are organized by administrations of districts, cities, territories, and regions, which thus gain certain "high-status" return, for which they do not have any moral right. However, such organizations are mainly simulations, which currently exist only by inertia and do not cause any stimulus for active participation of people in them.

Besides, the said organizational, institutional, and economic conditions of operation of pro-government organizations contribute to the growth of

abuse of the administrative power and the corruption in the social and political system, which along with the absence of procedural regulation of the main part of their relations with the government significantly concerns the rights and freedoms of citizens. This indicates a severe deformation of the existing system of operation of the non-commercial sector: when satisfaction of demands of civil organizations and their representation in the authorities is paid more attention than solution of problems of the population.

The socio-political substantiation of collective regional actions is always the same: extra funds are required for supporting the regional socio-ethnic and confessional stability, publishing newspapers and magazines in native languages. In the real life, the civil society almost always fails to monitor appropriate expenditure of the federal budget funds.

And federal control contradicts in many aspects to the Russian legislation, according to which the right of allocation of expenses of the budgets of subjects of the Federation is acknowledged by the federal authorities. At that, the federal authorities often do not require or fail to receive detailed reports by expense items and clarifications of excesses of approved estimates from regional authorities. Thus, the budget funds are sprayed, and the responsibility for fulfillment of measures as well as concurrence of program implementation decreases.

The selective approach to the government control over implementation of socio-economic programs results in the fact that in certain cases, officials guilty in violation of the financial and budgetary law avoid any penalty stipulated by the law, and in other cases, leaders of regional powers are punished too severely even for insignificant violations. The responsibility for selection of investment objects, which, according to the delineation of authority, is assigned to regional and local powers that are known to have lesser expenses for control has not yet been assigned to the authorities of the subjects of the Federation.

Taking into account the objective difficulty of stating effective rules and criteria of distribution of investments from the federal budget between regions (with regard to investment resources allocated to financing objects of regional and local importance), it is necessary to limit voluntary reallocation of budget-funded subsidies on the local level.

The realization by the regional society of the fact that investments rarely reach their destination, results in rising socio-ethnic tensions in the region, as in such situations, ethnic leaders usually obtain grounds for accusing regional powers in conscious limitation of budget expenses for development of certain ethnic groups. In 1990's, in the circumstances of de-communization and deideologization of the

society as well as actual collapse of regular mechanisms of vertical mobility (related to economy, party, trade union, Komsomol, etc.), it was the national idea that became the prevailing factor for the new configuration of the power in republics and regions of the South of Russia.

The elites at power instantly recollected their ethnic origin, and the intelligentsia – the collective rights of their ethnic groups. Nevertheless, as the Russian political scientist A.S. Panarin noted, the "value-based rhetoric" used in such cases has become used only for external purposes – for the people at large. Inside the class of professionals, in the "kitchen" where the power is assigned, it is not taken into account... Inside the field of politics, there is no collision of values, and even of interests, but of powers, and the real policy acts as the result of collision of forces involved in the power production. All other concepts – from the "ultimate values" to the "ultimate interests" – act only in the context of the power production as a means of its achievement [10].

In the situation of actual transformation of republics into tributary principalities, both horizontal social relations and civil networks have never managed to emerge. The binding of regional administrative bodies and criminal groups has taken place. The political power has in fact been purposefully given by federal elites to a local leader who swore loyalty in response (there is a famous expression by B.N. Yeltsin: "Take as much sovereignty as you can chew"). The interests of the civil society were not taken into account at all. "... Treating their offices as private property, elites also treat as private property the share of the state-owned property that they receive due to their offices. The elites are divided within themselves into closed clans. They make efforts to turn many professions to inherited ones. In the society, almost elite and semi-elite corporations emerge, which have their own interests and which protect their own privileges" [11]. According to scientists, efforts are made to turn many professions into inherited ones by formation of professional dynasties [12].

The idea of the regional new feudatory system is that it is based on personal loyalty of vassals of each level to their patron. The law is substituted with the personal obligation and responsibility for its fulfillment. The client-to-patron and vassal chains have been cemented with a particular morale – the rules of the game, which provide for both mutual support and sanctions (punishments) with respect to persons who have overstepped the mark allowed by ethnic solidarity [13].

The criminal and informal traditional systems of political influence so easily find common grounds in the South of Russia for the reason that both of them

are based on similar elements of the traditional Caucasian system of values, such as: hierarchical pattern, conspiracy of silence, preference of interests of a group to the interests of an individual, the informal practice of settlement of conflicts in accordance with the adopted group standards.

In the circumstances of the North Caucasian region, the ethnic, clan, clienteling relations have been acting and mainly continue to act as the main factor that determines the power allocation. Extension of the sphere of ethnic pattern has resulted in certain nihilism of people with regard to the state, the legal system, and the civil society. The "government order" for independent civil participation and control, for social initiative, participation in the civil life has in fact disappeared in regions. As a result, in the regions both civil and ethnic structures have been co-existing, providing for both legal and extralegal protection of rights of members of a certain ethnic group. F. Hayek noticed in this regard: "The new rules of such a kind became popular not because people started to understand their better efficiency... but merely because the groups that were supporting them started to reproduce more successfully and include outsiders" [14].

In the South of Russia, in the circumstances of extensive transformation of the sets of values and standards, regional powers often restricted the rights of ethnic minorities who thereafter appealed for protection of their freedoms to the federal power. The problems of insufficient legal protection of individuals most often arise in polyethnic republics, when, for example, in the middle of 1990's, the Balkars in Kabardino-Balkaria accused regional powers (which consisted of Kabardians mainly by ethnicity) in purposeful limitation of funds allocated for development of the Balkarian national culture, literature, or language.

Ethnic elites must be interested in the stability of the regional society and its progressive development. Only responsible elites will be trying to achieve mutual understanding of the political powers and the civil society. Only the bureaucratic ignorance of certain representatives of elites does not allow the federal and regional authorities to understand that the existing unfair and unclear division of power between the federal center and regions must be gently changed. Thus, we can understand why citizens generally ignore the capacities of both the regional power and regional civil organizations, as they believe them limited and inefficient. For the South of Russia, the negative attitude to the capacities of civil organizations in terms of fulfillment of functions of control over the authorities is also expressed by the prevailing ethnocultural traditions: the habit to rely only on one's own abilities and the abilities of one's

family and relatives at solution of critical problems, the proneness to entrepreneurship and trade rather than to participation in civil organizations, the traditional habit to negotiate with the power or struggle against it rather than control it based on the global law.

Part of functions of civil control in the "grey zone" of interaction of the civil society with the state, which is not unanimously permitted by the federal and regional legislation, but which cannot be completely forbidden by the institutions of law-enforcement, continue to be implemented by illegal traditional and religiously radical groups of so-called "young Jamaats" (Ingush, Kabardian etc.). These are social structures, which act independently from each other based on radical Islamic ideology mainly developed abroad. The main goal of their activity is to promote their ideological patterns in the public opinion as well as the power fight with representatives of regional law-enforcement agencies under the pretext of their corruption and lawlessness.

According to A.N.-Z. Dibirow [15], the main cause of the growth of social influence of Jamaats is that the law-enforcement agencies in the South of Russia are not respected by the society. They are more of an untrusted, suspected, and even hated power in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the population of the republics and the regions.

The unexposed multiple murders of regional political and public actors, the paid-for criminal cases, the unreasonable arrests of innocent people with the purpose of blackmailing and racketeering, the amateurism in ensuring people's safety, the multiple scandals inside the law-enforcement system itself (including multiple cases of video appeals of common officers to the President of Russia via social networking systems) – all those add little respect to the regional law-enforcement system. And in the eyes of people who have suffered from lawless actions of "people in uniform", terroristic acts, targeting bodies of the Ministry of Interior and its officers are treated as acts of recompense.

The result of the weakness of the civilian control is that the law-enforcement system and the law-enforcement practice in the likeness of protection of state interest and struggle with terrorism has turned into the criminal terror against own population pursuing the corrupted interests of the regional ruling elite.

Thus, the civil control operates in the South of Russia, on the one hand, in the circumstances of both social consequences of the transitional period of reforms, imperfectness of market relations and

respective to them legal standards of relations of the civil society, the business, and the state at this stage, accompanied by weakness and instability of the state power, which is not able to eliminate radicalization of the regional society and to force the law-enforcement system to abide strictly by the law, and, on the other hand, as an extension of development of the historical traditions of paternalism, nepotism, as well as perception of the state as an entity foreign to the social system.

"Is the Russian society ready for modernization?", asks M.K. Gorshkov and replies to this question: "In the Russian society, there is rather considerable potential to modernization, but its scope and nature of localization, existing singularities of the ethnic mentality, the system of social institutions existing in Russia, and all-permeating corruption make the task of implementation of this potential very difficult" [16]. And we should agree with that as well as with the fact that the level of efficiency of the modernization process is different depending on the particular region with its ethnic singularity.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Volkov Yury Grigorjevich
Southern Russian Branch of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Institute of retraining of Southern Federal University
Pushkinskaya str., 160, Rostov-on-Don, Russia
e-mail: infoipk@sfedu.ru

References

1. Black, C., 1975. The Modernization of Japan and Russia. Free Press, Political Science, pp: 386.
2. Bernstein, H., 1971. Modernization theory and the sociological study of development. Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 7 2: P. 23.
3. Yanitsky, O.N., 2011. Modernization in Russia: Abstract. Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya, 5: 136.
4. Gorshkov, M.K., 2011. The Russian society: as it is (Experience of sociological diagnostics). Moscow: Novy Khronograf, pp: 281.

5. Zayats, P. and O. Posukhova, 2013. Engineering of Political Party Systems: experience of methodological designing in social and humanitarian knowledge. World Applied Sciences Journal, 26(12): 1628-1632. Date Views: 16.01.2014 [http://www.idosi.org/wasj/wasj26\(12\)13/16.pdf](http://www.idosi.org/wasj/wasj26(12)13/16.pdf).

6. De Waal, Th., 2011. The Caucasus: An Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp: 342.

7. Boehm, C., 2000. Conflict and the Evolution of Social Control. Journal of Consciousness Studies, 7: 180.

8. Kadyrov, R.A., 2008. About the situation in the Northern Caucasia, particularly in Chechnya. In Selected Articles and Speeches. Grozny: ChSU, pp: 56.

9. Mizruchi, E.H., 1983. Regulating society: Marginality and. Social control in hist. Perspective. New York: Free press, pp: 410.

10. Panarin, A.S., 2000. Politology. Moscow: Gardarika, pp: 106.

11. Pastukhov, V.B., 1993. From Nomenklatura to Bourgeoisie: the New Russians. Polis, 2: 15.

12. Posukhova, O.Yu., 2013. Professional Dynasty as a Result of Family Strategies: Inertia or Succession? Vlast, 12: P. 100–103.

13. Tsvetkov, O.M., 2000. Urgent Problems of Ensuring Political Security in the Northern Caucasia region. In Caucasia: the Problems of Cultural and Civilizational Development, Eds., Volkov, Yu.G. Rostov-on-Don: the SKNC VSh Publishing House, pp: 46.

14. Hayek, F.A., 1992. Destructive Arrogance. Moscow: Respublika, pp: 32.

15. Dibirov, A.N.Z., 2007. From Marginality to the New National Identity of Dagestan. In the Current Problems of Fighting Religious and Political Extremism. The DGU Publishing House, pp: 574.

16. Gorshkov, M.K., 2010. The Social Factors of Modernization of the Russian Society in Terms of Sociology. Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya, 12: 41.

07/06/2014