

Development of the Third Sector: Social Activity Management

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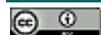
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Abstract

Social activity is a catalyst for the development of civil society, the nonprofit sector (the third sector), and the commercial sector, as well as the basis for the development of a legislative, economic initiative. In the modern society, the civic activity is accumulated in the third sector, and has a wide variety of forms, while for the traditional society, such tools as political parties and trade unions were sufficient. Social tasks solved within the third sector set the vector and dynamics of citizens' activity and make it constructive. The social activity of the population depends on the impact of two groups of factors: objective (the population's income level, the level of unemployment, the state of the infrastructure and regulatory framework, etc.) and subjective (the level of the population's trust in socially-oriented nonprofit organizations, attitude of the local population to the activities of public organizations, etc.). In order to obtain empirical knowledge about forms of social activity in the Russian Federation (through the example of the Volgograd Region), tools for assessing the population's awareness of modern types of social participation have been developed, and the readiness of actors for charitable and volunteer activity has been measured. The research tools have been tested through the example of the Volgograd Region of the Russian Federation. According to the research results, problem zones have been identified, technologies of social activity development have been structured, which has made it possible to identify the vector of social activity in the Volgograd Region of the Russian Federation and conclude that objective conditions do not allow increasing the efficiency of socially-oriented nonprofit organizations.

Keywords: Social activity; Third sector; Civil engagement; Public participation; Community participation; Nonprofit organization; Socially-oriented nonprofit organizations; Social entrepreneurship.



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1. Introduction

Social activity is considered in several aspects: philosophical, sociological, socio-psychological and politological. The idea of social activity is found in philosophical studies of the Sophists who divide what is done by the nature and created by people (not only material objects, but also the world of ideas). Aristotle defines social activity as a polis activity, civic engagement in the affairs of the state and the community. At the same time, politics is the search for the optimal mode of this activity. In the philosophy of the European Middle Ages, social activity is found as the idea of an active class-corporate service to government and trust. Modern understanding of social activity as a free transformational activity, civil self-organization and participation was formed in the culture of the New Time under the influence of the imperatives of the ideology of protestantism, liberalism, values of the Enlightenment and the philosophy of activity (German classics, Marxism, pragmatism). The Marxist social philosophy considers the problem of social activity of the individual and social communities in the mainstream of the activity approach.

In the context of positivistically focused sociological theories, social activity is associated with conscious motives and attitudes, social functions, norms and roles. When social communities occur, they are independent actors and, at the same time, a means of improving the individual's social activity. In interpretive theories, social activity is considered in the context of dialogue and communication as a form of sign and symbolic interaction required for self-preservation and changing of the social reality. At the same time, both groups of theories recognize sociocultural stipulation of the individual's activity, his dependence on the ability of the subject that performs purposeful activity, and the constant expectation of the surrounding reaction to his actions (Waters and Waters, 2015). In the system sociological analysis, the actor's activity is associated with the success of fulfilling social functions: adaptation to the environment, achieving goals, integration, and maintaining a sample (Parsons, 2001). The actor's activity in modern societies is related to meeting personal interests by having an impact on social

structures by applying appropriate knowledge, norms and resources (Giddens, 1984). The issues on the criteria, sources, typing of the actors' social activity were touched upon in the work of P. Sztompka (Sztompka, 1993).

Social activity as a phenomenon of modern society is of a multidimensional nature. There are various types of social activity. They differ by the breadth of covering parties in interest (personality's activity, group's activity, mass activity), by source of initiative (reactive, proactive, preventive), and by time characteristics (short-term, long-term, permanent, single, systematic, etc.). An important criterion for distinguishing types of social activity is the area of human life activity, where the activity is performed.

Social activity of actors is found in forms of civic engagement (involvement), public participation, and community participation. The term "civil engagement" is associated with the idea of broader, more participatory forms of democracy. This term is used when it goes about the participation that can cause improvement in the collective conditions of existence, social environment where actors act. Such participation helps to solve issues that are important not for some but many communities (Karatzas, 2016). Elements of civic engagement are also considered to include encouraging volunteerism (Healey, 2008).

The term "public participation" is interpreted ambiguously and is not permanent. There are offers to consider new forms of social activity. For example, Innes and Booher relate these tendencies to the fact that in the USA the public hearings, as a legal method of public participation in decision making, have ceased to work efficiently (Innes and Booher, 2004). In order to denote the activity that can solve complex, disputable issues, such as budget, taking important decisions, the term "collaborative participation" is offered.

In order to define how income inequality is related to civic and social participation or to establish a relation between the level of household income and social participation, such notions as "civic and social participation" are used, for example, (Lancee and Van, 2012). The participation on the level of communal communities is defined as "community participation" (Taylor, 2007).

Belokurova and Vorob'ev note that in Russia the growth of protest participation is observed when there are no efficient mechanisms for public participation in forming the policy, and decisions taken by local regimes violate the rights and interests of certain social groups. Nongovernmental organizations play an important role in local governance, but they are rather weak as compared to political elites (Belokurova and Vorob'ev, 2011).

On the institutional level, the social activity of actors is related to the third sector. In Europe, the third sector is assessed as "unique, renewable resources" to solve socio-economic problems and civic engagement (Salamon L. M. and Sokolowski, 2016a). However, today the third sector is not limited to formal socially oriented nonprofit organizations (hereinafter referred to as SO NPOs) that are a part of it, but it is a complex heterogeneous aggregate. While initially institutionalized organizations with employees and volunteers were earlier referred as the third sector, today it is obvious that other forms of socially significant activity should be taken into account. These can be manifestations of individual initiatives, projects of social entrepreneurship (Poltavskaya, 2015), including the work of SO NPO with migrants (Vasilieva et al., 2017), and other forms of self-organization of civil society. The third sector is very difficult to quantify. There were attempts to analyze the first comprehensive "round earth" statistical map of the nonprofit sector (Smith, 1997).

According to the recent data, the European third sector was assessed as 28.3 million full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (paid and volunteer) in the 28 EU countries and Norway. The European third sector thus accounts for nearly 13 per cent of the European workforce (Salamon L. M. and Sokolowski, 2016b).

In their research the authors rely on the following idea: it is more reasonable to carry out an empirical measurement of the problems of "civil society" through the indicators of the "third sector" (Viterna et al., 2015).

2. Methods

The methods used in the research make up two groups. The first group includes methods for assessing *objective* indicators: population dynamics, dynamics of the third sector development in the Russian Federation, and dynamics of the third sector development in the Volgograd Region. Thus, objective statistical indicators make it possible to characterize the dynamics of the third sector development in the Volgograd Region.

SO NPOs belong to the so-called "third sector", whose development conditions considerably differ in various regions of Russia. That is why empirical indicators of the development of the third sector include awareness and participation of citizens in the SO NPOs' activities. The maximum number of SO NPOs – 6,408 – is found in the Krasnodar Territory, and the minimum number – in Chukotka (38), i.e. the difference in the number is 169 times (Krasnopolskaya et al., 2015). These differences cannot be fully explained by the level of economic development or by peculiarities of regional and municipal policies towards SO NPOs. The authors consider the level of development and the size of the third sector as a dependent variable from the features of the historical development of the region, peculiarities of the configuration of interactions of various social groups within the social within the approach (Salamon L. M. A., H. K., 1998). According to the Federal State Statistics Service, in 2012 more than 96,000 SO NPOs were registered in Russia, including 1,882 SO NPOs in the Volgograd Region. As on the end of 2015, about 140 thous. SO NPOs were registered in Russia, i.e. about 62% of the total number of registered nonprofit organizations (Doklad O Sostoyanii Grazhdanskogo Obshchestva V Rossiiskoi Federatsiiza 2016 God, 2016).

As of the end of 2016, there were 143,436 SO NPOs registered in Russia, including 2,811 SO NPOs in the Volgograd Region (Unified Interdepartmental Information and Statistical System).

Table-1. Dynamics of Developing the Third Sector (So Npos) In Russia And Volgograd Region For 2012–2016*

Number of SO NPOs	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
the Russian Federation	96,728	113,237	132,087	140,031	143,436
the Volgograd region	1,882	4,027	2,916	2,922	2,811

*Federal State Statistics Service. Number of SO NPOs, data for 2012-2016. Compiled by the authors

The data represented in Table 1 show the dynamics of the third sector development, which confirms the opinion of experts of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation that it is necessary to speak about the increasing number of NPOs registered as SO NPOs rather than about the growth of this sector (*Doklad O Sostoyanii Grazhdanskogo Obschestva V Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2016 God, 2016*).

The second group includes methods for assessing *subjective* indicators based on sociological research data. The authors conducted a mass survey of the population of the Volgograd Region (method of formalized survey), where 1,000 people aged 18 to 75 years took part. The sample is a quota representing the age and gender composition of municipal formations. The possible statistical error does not exceed 3.16%. Quotas by age – from 18 to 34 years old, from 35 to 54 years old, 55 years old and older – are calculated in proportion to the size of the population.

Quotas by gender and age were calculated on the basis of the data provided on the website of the Territorial Body of the Federal Service of State Statistics for the Volgograd Region (Volgograd Region in Figures, 2015). Quotas by place of residence were calculated on the basis of the data from the Results of the 2010 All-Russia Population Census (*Itogi Vserossiyskoy perepisi naseleniya 2010 goda, n.d.*).

The main tasks of the research were to determine the level of the population's awareness about the SO NPOs activities, to define the social basis for developing SO NPOs by identifying the percentage of citizens who are ready to actively participate in the SO NPOs activities (permanent membership, volunteerism, charity).

The first step of the research was to define the level of citizens' awareness of SO NPOs and to determine the main channels for citizens to obtain information about the SO NPOs activities. In general, 57.0% of the population heard about various funds, associations, partnerships and movements (Table 2).

Table-2. Level of The Awareness of The Population of The Volgograd Region About the So Npos Activities

	Frequency	Percent	Validity percent
Yes	570	57.0	57.0
No	430	43.0	43.0
In total	1000	100.0	100.0

However, when in the next question it was suggested to indicate the names of well-known SO NPOs, only 32.2% of 57.0% of the population who knew about SO NPOs could name the organizations correctly, 8.2% called organizations, the legal form of which was not SO NPO, and the remaining 16.6% found it difficult to answer (Table 3). Thus, it is possible to state that only 32.2% of the population are competent in the matters related to the SO NPOs activities. According to the data about the awareness of the population of the Volgograd Region about SO NPOs, it is impossible to judge about its social activity, because the activity can be performed in noninstitutional forms.

Table-3. Awareness About Certain So Npos That Perform Their Activities on The Territory of Residence

	Frequency	Percent	Validity percent
Mention correctly	322	32.2	32.2
Mention partially correctly	82	8.2	8.2
Not sure	596	59.6	59.6
In total	1000	100.0	100.0

It is possible to state that citizens of the Volgograd Region are the most informed about the activities of charity (74.4%), children's and youth organizations (58.9%), and to a lesser extent they know about organizations working with disabled people, elderly people and other socially vulnerable groups (46.0%), as well as patriotic organizations (42.7%) (Table 4).

Table-4. Awareness of The Population of The Volgograd Region About the So Nposactivities (Allocated in The General Aggregate)

	Answers		Percent of observations
	Frequency	Percent	
Charity organizations	744	21.3%	74.4%
Children's and youth organizations	589	16.9%	58.9%
Organizations working with disabled people, elderly people and other socially vulnerable groups	460	13.2%	46.0%
Organizations protecting rights and interests of various categories of the population	199	5.7%	19.9%
Organizations that develop creative abilities, and carry out additional education	140	4.0%	14.0%
Patriotic organizations	427	12.2%	42.7%
Organizations that form healthy lifestyle of the population and	189	5.4%	18.9%

organize mass sports			
Organizations that work on stabilizing international relations, national communities	43	1.2%	4.3%
Organizations that protect motherhood and childhood (prevention of orphanage)	259	7.4%	25.9%
Ecological movements (overcoming violent acts of nature)	267	7.6%	26.7%
Professional and creative unions and associations	144	4.1%	14.4%
Not sure	31	0.9%	3.1%
In total	3,492	100.0%	349.2%

Thus, it is possible to make the conclusion that the awareness of citizens in the Volgograd Region about the SO NPOs activities is low, which is mutually conditioned by the low activity of citizens of the Volgograd Region – only 12.7% of respondents are informed due to their personal participation. Table 5 shows data on the forms of social activity of the population of the Volgograd Region, without classifying into institutional (in the SO NPOs activities) and noninstitutional forms of participation.

Table-5. Forms of Social Activity of The Population in The Volgograd Region

	Answers		Percent of observations
	Frequency	Percent	
Participation as a volunteer in a charity project, charity event organized by SO NPO	85	15.4%	25.1
Participation as a volunteer in a charity project organized by individuals	63	11.4%	18.6%
Bringing things in the charity organization	253	45.9%	74.6%
Transferring money to a certain person's account	105	19.1%	31.0%
Transferring money to a charity account of a SO NPO (funds, associations)	43	7.8%	12.7%
Not sure	2	0.4%	0.6%
In total	551	100.0%	162.5%

Analyzing the forms of the activities performed on the territory of the Volgograd Region, it is possible to state that material assistance (things, etc.) holds the first position – 74.6%; it is followed by volunteerism (personal participation) – 25.1%, and financial assistance (money transfer) - 31%. Depending on the form of assistance, the role of SO NPOs differs: it is high in organizing the volunteer activities and low in organizing financial assistance.

3. Discussion

The obtained results indicate that far from every activity is the basis for developing the “third sector”. In the traditional society, tools of legal manifestation of social activity are political parties and trade unions (Pankratov *et al.*, 2017). In the modern society, the activity is also accumulated in the “third sector”. Social tasks that are solved by SO NPOs set the vector and dynamics of citizens' activity and make it constructive. The provided results of the empirical research show the growth of the number of SO NPOs in the Volgograd Region, but the number of citizens employed in the third sector is growing insignificantly. The growth of the number of SO NPOs shows that the mechanism for registering a nonprofit organization is legally simple, but it is difficult to perform the activities in the region where the population is poorly informed about the role and activities of public organizations, which causes rapid liquidation of some part of the organization. The activity of citizens will grow subject to the following conditions: improvement of the material well-being of citizens (sustainable income, confidence in the future, and in work), improvement of the level of citizens' trust in the SO NPOs activities, and the growth of openness and publicity. Not only insufficient awareness of citizens, but also objective conditions – lack of the information support infrastructure, legal and social base, financial resources – do not allow increasing the efficiency of SO NPOs. Thus, it goes about institutional (legal, economic, political) framework of performing social activity.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it is possible to make the following conclusions. By creating conditions for the implementation of initiatives “from the bottom”, including inhabitants of the region in discussing and forming concepts for the development of the urban environment and the local community, and improving the comfort for living, local authorities and organizations of the third sector can make local inhabitants be their partners. On their territories administrations of the region and municipalities must create separate places where urban communities together with representatives of authorities and experts in various areas could discuss urgent problems, offer their own solutions, and undertake a part of responsibility for the offered changes. It is also necessary to support community initiatives in terms of information policy, because, as it was defined during the research, the awareness of the population of the Volgograd region is not high. Efficient information policy can attract as many people as

possible to the processes of changing the life of local communities for the better and increase the constructive social activity of the region population.

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