

# Indicators of Civil Society Development in the Border Regions of the Russian Federation

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**Abstract**—The subjects of the research are preconditions of formation of civil society in six regions of the Russian Federation.

The primary data collection was done by a questionnaire in six Russian regions: the Altai krai, the Jewish Autonomous oblast, the Trans-Baikal krai, the Kemerovo krai, the Omsk oblast, the Orenburg oblast (total sample size amounted to n=2400, the age of the respondents was from 18 to 70 years).

The novelty of the research consists in the analysis of the basic spectrum of the existing problems in the development of the nonprofit sector in six regions of the Russian Federation. Our own analysis of their causes is proposed and the constructive approaches of the formation and development of civil society were highlighted. On the basis of the obtained data conclusions about the current situation, public and socio-economic activity of the population, the attitude of the population of six Russian subjects towards development of civil society in the region and Russia, evaluation, under the influence of what factors it is composed, and by what means it is possible to affect change are made. Ultimately, the findings are focused on the description of the characteristics of the development of civil society, the main problems and prospects in the activities of the nonprofit sector in the Russian Federation and the six border areas are identified from the standpoint of the population and priorities for action in the development of civil society are identified.

**Index Terms**— Citizenship, civil society, level of development, social capital, subjects of the Russian Federation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The building of the civil society – is one of the first tasks in the contemporary Russian Federation. In Russian political and social discourse, the problem of the civil society emerged in 1980s for the first time together with mass-public movements [1], [2]. Since that time, the civil society considered as the necessary condition of social development and effective interaction between society and government.

In Russia, the process of statement and functioning of institutes of civil society connected with a number of problems [3], [4]. Thus, by data of the Public Chamber, nowadays there are no any stable interaction between chamber and government: Russian non-commercial organizations face lot of administrative barriers;

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co-ordination of public activity between the government and non-commercial organizations is not a constant practice [5]. The other problem is the limitation of opportunities of productive communications between the Russian citizens and non-commercial organizations, caused by the lack of knowledge about such institutions and principles of their activity. It is possible to find a way to resolve these difficulties basing on results of empirical research of conditions of development of civil society.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The basic premise in the study about the civil society is the fact that the civil society remains open to interpretations [6], [7]-[9]. The definitions have changed over time, but even in its current use the concept ‘has various connotations in different countries and languages’ [10]-[12]. Rather often, the ‘civil society’ understood as the totality of relatively independent public organizations, which are free from the government, able to express and realize interests of the citizens through self-organization, self-government and constructive dialogue with the state. Initial sense of this notion consists in the necessity of protection of citizens’ community from rude tyranny of the state. Formation of developed civil society bases on balanced combination of public and private interests with the dominance of private interests and absolute understanding of highest value of a human, his/her rights and freedoms [13].

According to A. Ferguson, the highest goal of the civil society is individuals’ happiness, because it is the fundamental base of universal well-being [14]. Creation of such society is possible only with conditions of the understood attitudes to independent participation in decision-making, turning them into life, and provision of conditions for such civic involvement [15].

The contemporary understanding of civil society refers to the public sphere, for example, as set apart from the state and the market. Some theories understand the civil society as a synonym for some kind of ‘political association, whose members are subject to laws, which ensure peaceful order and good government’ [16]. In sociology, the theory of the civil society presented by works of T. Parsons, E. Shils, N. Luhmann [17], [18], [19]. We should mark a considerable input of the general systems theory [20]. In relation to it, the civil society has certain system indicators: it is governing and controlled system; it obtains definite autonomy and own structure, stability and dynamics, transparency and adaptation, unity and possibility of differentiation of elements [21].

In the XX century the notion of the civil society

transformed through statist ideologies, the XXI century it became understood in combination with social entrepreneurship and civic reinvention, ‘lost faith in centralized systems of government, and increased efficiency and credibility of civil society organizations, as well as a renewed quest for values and interest in volunteerism’ [22]. As a result, civil society has become understood as ‘the essential mediating structure because it stands as a buffer between the individual and the large structures of the state and the market, but also because it plays a crucial role in cultivating citizenship as well as generating and maintaining values in society’ [23].

General indicators of the civil society determined in some theories: democracy regime; developed law system, guarantees for human’ and citizens’ rights and freedoms; multiple character and diversity of non-governmental public organizations (communities); ideology variety and political pluralism. The given research is devoted to the analysis of manifestations of the abovementioned indicators in contemporary Russian society through the attitudes and positions of citizens.

Formation of the civil society is the multi-stage, non-linear process of emergence and construction in social area of the system of institutes and structures, elements and subjects of the civil society. Its content, ways of realization, time, and the vector determined by the stage of development of functional differentiation of the social system. In the process of realization of function of the civil society, it forms civil virtues, creates structures of civil inclusion, solidarity, trust, and tolerance. Formation and development of the civil society in combination with all its institutes is possible only in conditions of the law state, providing economic freedoms and social stability, protected rights of citizens, freedom of information and public opinion, transparency and tolerance, self-governing and civic activity basing on constructing cooperation between government and public communities. Absence or weakness of such conditions will prevent the realization of civic initiatives, use of different possibilities and potential of public institutions in solution of the sharpest problems and implementation of innovations.

### III. METHODS

Analysis of indexes of development of civil society realized on the base of sociological research<sup>1</sup>. The research covered six regions of the Russian Federation: the Altai krai, the Jewish Autonomous oblast, the Trans-Baikal krai, the Kemerovo krai, the Omsk oblast, and the Orenburg krai.

We used the following indicators to estimate the condition of objects of the study:

- understanding of the notion “civil society”;
- level of responsibility for what is going on in present in region, city, own home and surrounding;
- estimation of level of social harmony and solidarity;
- estimation of extent of unity with different categories of citizens;

<sup>1</sup> “Conditions, problems and tendencies of development of institutional and interpersonal trust as the social capital of civil society in six subjects of the Russian Federation”, sampling n = 2400 respondent at the age 18-70 years.

- estimation of opportunity of effective interaction between representatives of different social groups;
- relation to rights and obligations of the citizen;
- participation in public activity;
- estimations of the manifestation of conditions of development of the civil society.

General empirical methods of data collection and analysis: questioning, traditional documentary analyses, methods of mathematical-statistical analysis with use of the MS Office 2013 and SPSS 17.0.

### IV. PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS

First of all, we consider the meaning of civil society for the Russians. The most number of respondents (39.1%), while answering the question “How do you understand the notion “civil society”?” chose “the rule of law”. Also the following answers became popular: “the rule of interests of the citizens, but no the state” (29.5%), “cultural, civilized society” (26.6%), and “all citizens of the country” (25.0%). Alternative variant “all public organizations of the country” was the less popular, only 9.6% of respondents chose it (Table I).

TABLE I: DISTRIBUTION OF ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION: “HOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE NOTION “CIVIL SOCIETY””? WHAT DOES IT MEAN” (%)

The rule of law	39.1
The rule of interests of the citizens, but no the state	29.5
Solidarity, unity of the citizens	26.6
Cultural, civilized society	26.6
All citizens of the country	25.0
Democracy	23.8
Opportunity of citizens to influence policy	23.5
Humane, moral society	22.5
All public organizations of the country	9.6

Thus, respondents associate civil society with provision of rights and realization of individual interests of the citizens. During analysis, we concluded about polysemantic understanding of civil society by population and not corresponding to directives of the government.

One of presuppositions of civic activity is the sense of responsibility for what is going on in present. The Russians in the great extent feel themselves responsible for what is going on in their home and neighborhood (in the great extent 39.9%), and to the lesser extent for what is going on in city, region (15.6%), and the country (13.6%). These indexes do not demonstrate any significant correlations with different social-demographic characteristics. At the same time we fixed considerable differences between subjects of the Russian Federation about the extent of responsibility for what is going on in region and the city: the most part of respondents in the Omsk oblast, the Trans-Baikal krai, and the Jewish Autonomous oblast (23.5%, 18.2%, and 16.8% correspondingly), and the smallest part of respondents – in the Kemerovo krai (9.0%) understand responsibilities.

We suppose important the feeling of social harmony and solidarity in the state, opportunity of social support to provide motivation to the civic activity. Among respondents, we found the majority (54.2%) of those, who are sure of the great disagreement and isolation in Russian society. Only 30.9%

declared about social harmony and solidarity, and only 8.3% of respondents were sure of probability of mutual understanding and cooperation between the rich and the poor citizens. Only 6.9% of respondents were sure of probability of mutual understanding and cooperation between “ordinary people” and “those, who have power”.

No less important we suppose to test the feeling of unity, solidarity with compatriots to act for public interest. As a result, 76.6% of respondents feel solidarity with the Russian citizens, 74.5% – with the residents of own region, 77.6% – with the residents of own settlement, and 72.5% – with the own ethnoses. Similar estimations fixed about understanding of solidarity with the representatives of the same religion, profession, and income. Respondents feel the less solidarity about people of common political opinions (58.3%). Thus, while the Russians not always understand the possibilities for fruitful cooperation between compatriots, they feel unity and solidarity with the compatriots.

We estimated opinions about the correlation of roles of the government and public organizations basing on respondents’ agreement with the statements: “Public organizations must control any reforms with serious influence on my interests” (72.3% of respondents agreed); “Public organization must obtain the part of the state power” (51.0%); “Citizens have profit from the membership in free communities by interests” (69.4%); “Government policy must be public” (81.3%). Consequently, the majority is sure of the necessity of publicity and control under government’ activity. Moreover, almost half of the Russians still sure of the concentration of the power in the government’ hands.

In course to specify the analysis of understanding of civic role, rights, and obligations of the Russians we offered respondents to express the extent of own agreement with 16 pairs of opposite statements with the use of scaled method (from 1 to 6). According to the mean values, the Russians tend to the opinion about good citizen outside the policy, without any active political participation, and agreement with the government. Simultaneously, we revealed the predominance of such opinions: “people should not expect anything from the government”; “the majority of problems could be solved by community together by united efforts”; “each person should not bother only about his/herself, but about the surroundings, the own country”. Respondents were closer to the opinions “the real citizen is responsible for his/her actions and behavior”, “the citizen of the country must observe the law” rather than to the opposite statements. Also we should mention the choice of respondents about the following statements: “the country citizen – sounds proudly”, “all the citizens feel proud about the rising of the national flag, or the playing of the national hymn”, “the true citizen is always interested in national history, country history”. So we can conclude about presupposition in the Russian mentality about formation of civil society as a community of citizens, ready to realize group interests.

In a result of cluster analysis by k-means method, we specified 3 groups of respondents, differed by the relation to citizens’ obligations (Table II).

TABLE II: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THREE GROUPS IN RELATION TO CHARACTERISTICS OF CITIZENSHIP. RESULTS OF CLUSTER ANALYSIS (FINAL CLUSTER CENTERS, 6-SCALED)

	1 (30.5%)	2 (22.9%)	3 (46.6%)
1 – «All the citizens are unite nation and should be solidary to each over»			
6 – «All the citizens of our country are separated, mutual solidarity is impossible»	2	4	3
1 – «The citizen must know own rights and obligations well, struggle against injustice by any means»			
6 – «It is impossible to know all laws, ordinary citizen could not resist unlawful acts»	2	4	3
1 – «The true citizen is always interested in national history, country history»			
6 – «It is not obligatory to know the history of the country well to the good citizen»	1	4	2
1 – «The citizens must be agree with the government policy»			
6 – «The citizens must not be agree with the government policy»	2	5	4
1 – «Participation in the elections – the civic duty»			
6 – «The election does not matter anything, no any sense to vote»	2	4	3
1 – «All able to function citizens must protect their country in case of emergency»			
6 – «Only the army of professionals must protect the country»	2	4	3
1 – «The real citizen is responsible for own activity and behavior»			
6 – «Understanding of own civil responsibility and sense of duty deprive the people of freedom and sovereignty»	1	3	2
1 – «All the citizens feel proud about the rising of the national flag, or the playing of the national hymn»			
6 – «National emblem, hymn, and flag – just formal symbols of the state»	1	4	2
1 – «The country citizen – sounds proudly»			
6 – «Citizenship – just formal status, provoking no any emotions»	1	4	3
1 – «The human fell important to be a part of a certain civil community»			
6 – «It is important to be a personality, but not the citizen of the country»	2	4	3
1 – «The human must live and work in the country of citizenship»			
6 – «There is nothing wrong to leave the country in case of hard, crisis period»	2	4	3
1 – «The citizen of the country must observe the law»			
6 – «In some cases we may choose the evasion of the law»	1	4	3
1 – «Each citizen should be active in policy, to be the supporter of political party or movement»			
6 – «The policy is “the dirty business”, it is possible to be a good citizen outside the policy»	3	5	4
1 – «First of all we should think about own well-being, and then about other people and society in whole»			
6 – «Each person should not bother only about his/herself, but about the surroundings, the own country»	3	4	3

	1 (30.5%)	2 (22.9%)	3 (46.6%)
1 – «There is no sense to try to change the situation by themselves, something is possible only at the level of the government bodies»	3	4	3
6 – «The majority of problems could be solved by community together by united efforts»			
1 – «My interests should be protected against the state»			
6 – «Sometimes, for the public good, the state can interfere into provide business of own citizens»	3	3	3

The first group (30.5% of sampling) characterized by notions about politically active citizens, who agreed with the government policy, significant role of the national unity. The statements about the necessity of lawful and responsible behavior and fell of proud by the country are extremely true for this group of respondents. Representatives of the second group (22.9% of total sampling) tend to individualist positions and deny the necessity of active participation in social life of the country and support of actual political course. Such respondents feel close to the statements «In some cases we may choose the evasion of the law» and «Citizenship – just formal status, provoking no any emotions». At the same time, only this group of respondents close to the statement “Each person should not bother only about his/herself, but about the surroundings, the own country” then to the opposite statement. The third group of respondents (46.6% of sampling) has position that is more flexible. These respondents tend to the opinion, that the citizens should not be active in policy and should be the supporters of the government, but they should be responsible for their actions and appreciate the affiliation to civil society.

Parts of representatives of the abovementioned groups differ by the territory of residence ( $\chi^2$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , Table III). Part of the first “state supporting group” is the majority in the Jewish Autonomous oblast and the minority in Kemerovo and Orenburg oblast. Representatives of the second “individualist” group are the majority in Orenburg oblast and the minority in Altai krai.

TABLE III: DISTRIBUTION OF THE GROUPS BY RELATION TO CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CITIZENSHIP IN SIX SUBJECTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (%)

Subject of the Russian Federation	1 (the citizen is inseparable from the state)	2 (the citizen is absolutely autonomous)	3 (average positions)
Altai krai	32,1	16,2	51,7
Jewish Autonomous oblast	<b>39,9</b>	20,7	39,4
Trans-Baikal krai	30,2	23,5	46,3
Kemerovo oblast	26,6	21,3	52,1
Omsk oblast	33,1	20,9	46,1
Orenburg oblast	21,2	<b>34,8</b>	44,0

We consider attitudes to organizations / communities, which respondent chose to apply for the first help in hard life situations as indicatives of relation to institutes of the civil society (Table IV).

TABLE IV: DISTRIBUTION OF ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION “IF YOU SUFFER FROM VIOLATION OF YOUR CIVIC OR POLITICAL RIGHTS, WHOM WOULD YOU PREFER TO APPLY FOR THE HELP AND PROTECTION IN THE FIRST PLACE? IN THE SECOND PLACE, IF YOU DID NOT GET SUPPORT? IN THE THIRD PLACE, IF YOUR TWO EFFORTS FAIL?” (%)

	First place	Second place	Third place
Nearest surroundings (family, friends, colleagues, community)	78.8	14.2	6.9
Human rights and other public organizations	22.4	51.0	26.7
Enforcement bodies (police, court, prosecutor)	33.9	41.4	24.7
Bodies of local or regional powers	12.1	39.9	47.9
President’s Administration, federal authorities	9.2	26.0	64.8
Mass Media, Internet	14.0	25.2	60.8

In most cases of violation of own rights the Russians will apply to the nearest surroundings (family, friends, colleagues, community) (78.8%). In the second place are enforcement bodies – 33.9% respondents will apply to it, first. At the first place are human rights and other public organizations (22.4%). However, we mark, that the majority of respondents will apply for such organization in the second place. In the last place, respondents will apply for the Mass Media and Internet, and bodies of power of different level.

The functioning of the civil society occurs due to the self-organized activity of the citizens. According to the obtained data, about half of respondents engaged into some kinds of public activities (53.4%). The most popular form of public activity is provision of assistance (by money, products, things): 48.4% of respondents even once provided any assistance during last year. The rather prevalent are such activities: charity and charity actions (20.9%), work as volunteer (18.1%), application to the government (17.9%), and singing of collective appeals, petitions (15.7%). Public speeches in support of something or somebody and participation in protest action (5.1% and 4.9% correspondingly) are the less popular.

Simultaneously we revealed the less number of the Russians engages into the activity of public organizations (37.3%). Among such public, non-governmental organizations are charity funds (22.4%), territorial self-government (20.3%) and professional communities (19.9%). 12.2% of respondents participate in the work of the youth organizations and organizations of additional education, and other types of non-governmental organizations (human rights, religious, political, ecology, and etc.) attract no more than 10.0% of respondents.

Only 16.6% of respondents cooperate with non-commercial organizations. Here we may suppose that people do not familiar with the activity of public organizations, specifics of non-commercial sector, and, including, do not associate non-commercial organizations with public sector (15.2% found difficult to answer the question). Thus, by data of the Research group CIRKON, in 2012 the part of citizens, who never heard about non-commercial organizations amounted 44.0% [23]. By data of the Center of political technologies for 2013, the level of information of the population smaller than ever: according to the research data, only 14.8% of the Russians know something about non-commercial organizations.

1.3% of our respondents are leaders of non-commercial organizations, 4.8% – are the staff of non-commercial organizations, 3.7% – volunteers, 4.3% – active participants of projects and programs, and 2.4% make donations.

We revealed, that respondents with different social-demographic characteristics demonstrate unequal levels of social activity ( $\chi^2$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Respondents with incomplete higher education, with the university degree, having high incomes, and at the age between 18-49 years are the most involved in the activity of non-commercial organizations. The youth rather often act as volunteers, persons of the middle age work in the staff of organizations. The youth is most involved in the work of the youth and additional education organizations; people at the age of 30-49 years – in the work of the professional communities; people the old age highly involved in territorial self-government. The young people are the most ready to work as volunteers, opposite the other age groups. Our data fixed evident correlation between the level of incomes and parts of participants of charity and political organizations, volunteers and people, who make public speeches in support of something: the higher the income the more active respondents. Opposite, people of low income often sing different applications, petitions and participate protest events. Respondents with university degree often make donations, participate political parties and organizations, sign petitions.

The activity of participation in con-commercial organizations is quite differing in regions of the Russian Federation. The most active are respondents in the Trans-Baikal krai (25.3% of participants among total sampling), the Jewish Autonomous oblast (23.1%) and the Altai krai (20.8%), the less active are respondents of the Omsk oblast (13.5%) and the Orenburg oblast (12.1%). respondents in the Kemerovo oblast are almost passive (5.0%).

We constructed 25 statements to estimate the conditions of development of the civil society in the Russian regions. Respondents estimated the level of verity of the each statement with scale of 10 points: 1 – “the less expressed”, 10 – “the highly expressed”. The mean values of statements variate from 4.03 to 6.316 points in total sampling; the mean value for all statements is 4.76 points. The tolerance for the people of alien ethnos and tolerance to alien religion are the highly estimated among other conditions of development of the civil society. The effect of anti-corruption measures obtained the smallest points (Table V).

TABLE V: ESTIMATION OF MANIFESTATIONS OF CONDITIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY (MEAN VALUES, 10-POINT SCALE)

Institutional conditions	Mean value
Tolerance to alien ethnos	6.16
Tolerance to alien religion, people of other confession	6.10
Free, responsible Mass Media, which are objective in information	5.06
Government is effective in functions in the sphere of culture, education and health care	5.02
Power is rationally divided between federal center and regions	5.02
Regular, free and honest elections	4.99
Equal access to the education	4.95
Local governments – power with means of its realization	4.85

Government is effective in functions in the sphere of supervision and control	4.83
Priority of the law, protected by independent courts, transparency of courts	4.75
Government is effective in its functions of control under law application	4.72
Government is effective in its functions of control under state property	4.71
Equal access to medical services	4.69
Parties are the real instrument of power formation and the lobbying of public interests	4.63
Legislative bodies create laws, directed on rights and interest of the electorate	4.63
Native business is socially responsible	4.60
Non-commercial sector is qualitatively developed, NGOs provide real social services for population and realize public expertise	4.53
Dialogue between the state and society while socially important decision making process is effective and public	4.47
Evaluation of activity of government is effective and considers public opinion	4.45
Regional administration is successful in solution of the conflicts	4.42
Effective system of support for civil initiatives	4.42
Effective system of regional government	4.40
Economy with guaranteed property, equal opportunities, guarantees for the miserable	4.38
Professional communities protect interests of the employers	4.29
Effective anti-corruption laws	4.03

Respondents of the Jewish Autonomous oblast (5.36) and the Orenburg oblast (5.24) gave the highest points to the conditions of development of civil society. The Altai krai (4.63), the Omsk oblast (4.62) and the Kemerovo krai (4.57) specified by not so high points and, respondents of the Trans-Baikal krai evaluated such conditions in the lowest points (4.17). We fixed the great diversity of estimations between regions towards the statement “Tolerance to alien ethnos” and Tolerance to alien religion”: correspondingly, the means are equal to 7.51 and 7.30 points in the Omsk oblast, 5.04 and 5.09 points in the Trans-Baikal region (taking into account 6.16 and 6.10 points in total sampling). We revealed considerable differences in estimation of the equality of access to medical services (mean in the Orenburg oblast is equal to 5.71, in the Trans-Baikal krai – 3.86 with taking into account 4.69 points in total sampling) and the effectiveness of the system of regional government (5.09 in the Kemerovo oblast and 3.37 in the Trans-Baikal krai with taking into account 4.40 points in total sampling).

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Results of the research let us to conclude about the presence of presuppositions for self-organization and participation of citizens in the activities of the institutes of the civil society. We fixed the feeling of solidarity with compatriots and the certain level of responsibility for local communities, understanding of the significance of law education, and attitudes towards the necessity of public control for the government and understanding of the profit from public communities.

Besides, the majority of respondents tend to the opinion about the opportunity of protection of citizens’ interests by non-governmental organizations. At the same time, attitudes

to the image of citizen are not synonymous for all the Russians. We revealed position with the priority of nation debt, necessity of support of own state, and conviction in person's independence from civil community.

One of obstacles in the development of the civil society is the absence of conviction in mutual understanding and cooperation in society between citizens with different status and the opinion about the prevalence of separation and disagreement in the country. In whole, the condition of social-political conditions of development of civil society estimated below the average. The dialogue between the state and society in socially important decision-making process, support for civic initiatives, protection of the property and equal opportunities in economy, prevention of the corruption are the less manifested among these conditions.

The situation in the Trans Baikal krai seems the most favorable among all observed regions: here we fixed the highest activity of participation in public organizations and the highest evaluations of conditions of development of the civil society. In the Orenburg oblast, the evaluations of conditions of development of the civil society are also high, but the level of civil activity is not so high. In Altai krai and Omsk oblast, we revealed average values among observed regions. In the Kemerovo oblast, the social activity of population is the less expressed. In the Trans Baikal region, we revealed rather high indexes of social activity and participation in the activity of non-commercial organizations and social responsibility, but the conditions of development of civil society were evaluated extremely low, especially the effectiveness of the system of regional government and the dialogue between the state and society.

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