# Methods of Collecting and Analyzing of Civil Initiatives to Improve the Life -Support System

Larissa Y. Logunova
Department of Sociological Sciences
Kemerovo State University
Kemerovo, Russia
vinsky888@mail.ru

Ekaterina A. Mazhenina
Department of Sociological Sciences,
Kemerovo State University
Kemerovo, Russia,
ekka0808@mail.ru

Natalia V. Nyatina
Department of Sociological Sciences
Kemerovo State University
Kemerovo, Russia
kozeeva_n@mail.ru

*Abstract*—**Civil initiatives require special methods of analysis. These capabilities have a hybrid research complexes. These research complexes are an integrative methodological apparatus for collecting and analyzing civil initiatives to improve the life -support system. The use of hybrid research complexes is based on the principles of interdisciplinarity. The complexes include reliance on the theoretical and methodological potential of related disciplines, innovative data collection technologies (civil initiatives), strategies and methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis. As a result of the application of quantitative and qualitative methodological complexes, the quantitative characteristics of the objects of research are filled with living meanings and experiences of a person; the situational uniqueness is preserved when it is possible to reach the levels of broad theoretical generalizations. Particular attention is paid to the use of classical methods of sociology in combination with methods of qualitative analysis. The article presents the architectonic hybrid methodological complex to work with civil initiatives.**

*Keywords*—*civil initiatives, life- support system, hybrid methodological complex*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The life- support system as an object of research is represented by a set of areas serving the needs of the population and stimulating the activity of people in maintaining and developing this system. Civil initiatives - the experience of a person which he shares with the authorities, an indicator of the connection of the population with the authorities, hopes for a better life, the development of a life support system. The work of the system management structures involves not only the paternalistic meaning of «caring for a person», but also the meaning of integrating the experience of the population, testing initiatives and appeals of citizens in the development of projects and programs for local development. This leads to the search for methods that promote the involvement of the population in solving live - support problems and research methods that have an integrative potential, the possibility of interdisciplinary coverage for the analysis of social problems. The basis of

these methods is possible a hybrid sociological methodology, taking into account the complexity of solving problems, as well as an interdisciplinary approach.

In modern sociology, the contradiction of research paradigms is viewed from the perspective of complementarity, inherent in any dichotomies. In this vein, models of integrative research strategies (A. Barton, P. Lazarfeld), tactics of combining methods that can compensate for weaknesses and strengthen the methodological capabilities of concepts (V. A. Yadov [1], A. S. Gotlib [2], O. M. Maslova [3], Yu. N. Tolstova [4]). Alternative paradigms have mastered the techniques of interpreting meanings, relying on «soft» principles of studying facts with an emphasis on subjectivity in the categories of microanalysis (A. Schütz, I. Hoffmann). An «active-activist» direction is being formed (E. Giddens, P. Bourdieu [5], P. Sztompka [6]), in line with which an attempt is made to combine the macro and micro approach in the analysis. Methodological arsenal of quantitative and qualitative analysis, the specificity of the combination of methods is adequate to the research of social systems of society.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The life- support system is represented by a collectively organized experience of a community that was formed in the process of mastering the living space and structures of everyday life. The duality of the life-support system lies in the ambiguity of the experience of two types: the experience of a person in his daily life and the experience of an official in organizing this life. On the one hand, the traditional life-support system, based on the experience and culture of community, is built into the structures of everyday life. On the other hand, - a professional life -support system is designed to help a person solve the tasks of his daily life [7].The initiative is a human experience; it is his understanding of life, turned to the power structures. Sending power signals in the form of appeals, initiatives, and a person combines the experience of the two systems. Initiatives task is setting functions and

structures of professional systems to meet the unique and diverse needs, differentiating in the process of social practice, to stimulate renovation professional life -support system, which contributes to its stability, flexibility, proximity to citizens' needs. Civil initiatives, on the one hand, compensate for the shortcomings of this system, help unprotected groups of the population, and are engaged in education; on the other hand, they are an organic «counterweight» that restrains the claims of the government and the state to public resources and the private life of an individual. These are « products», the result of «hidden life of demands and protests» (A. Touraine).

Initiatives of citizens are born in everyday life, from which it is impossible to wait for scientific understanding. Such initiatives are the « bottom-up» view of a person - the best expert of his problems in spite of the subjects of the professional life-support system with its paternalistic view of human needs. They reflect the criticism of the professional life support system, complaints about the impossibility of the functioning of this system in the new conditions. The traditional system is human-centered; it is based on human activity in solving its vital tasks. The functioning of this system determines the positive experience of a person, the success of his social innovation, which he can share with power. Civil initiative offers support for activity, self-organization, and human efforts to improve their lives. The practice of social order becomes topical when the local population decides to change something on its territory and turns to organizations and institutions for assistance. The structure of interests of the local community is dynamic and fluid.

The method chosen for the study of civic initiatives, form a methodical complexes, capable to cover macro-level of organizations, meso-level management of cities and human settlements, the micro-level, event-related-filled lives. These are hybrid-type complexes based on multi-paradigm, interdisciplinarity, having «microprobes» in the arsenal for a deep understanding of the characteristics of human experience and providing opportunities for a broad research look at the functioning of social institutions and systems.

The foundation of initiatives is a person's interest in improving life. Interest is an internal motivator of human activity. The interest focuses attention, orientation in social space, the desire for profit, for benefit. Interest is characterized by the motivated desire of the individual to control the resources that satisfy his needs with rational control over the development of the situation [8]. The degree of activity of the population in the manifestation of civil initiatives to improve their lives (landscaping, self-help groups for solving complex issues of living, spiritual creativity, organization of leisure) is an indicator of the vital forces of communities.

«The zone of everyday life», the living space of everyday life, says R. D. Putnam, is the territory of birth of interest. Other zones are considered by human as «indifferent zones» or «potentially dangerous zones of manipulation» [9] of its vital resources. Human interests are embedded in the structure of living space. They are multi-layered and hierarchical in degree of importance for him, describing the main types of activities and areas of life. To the immediate circle of interests are the personal choices of the social environment, the choice of forms of recreation, leisure preferences. The average range of interests is the choice of profession. Distant interests are political, industrial, and civil.

Interest is the degree of awareness of their benefits from the position of a citizen performing the duty of loyalty. It becomes the basis for the birth of an initiative in the form of an idea. In turn, the idea of civic initiative originates in the process of realizing by a person the contradiction between the real state of the environment and the ideal possibilities for its change. The internal incentive component of a civil initiative is a personal unmet need for something, an interest in the possibility of satisfying it. Personal motive is primary in relation to the needs of the group. There are no workable groups of civil initiatives created « from above». Civil initiatives are being created to serve the needs of the «daily zone». Civil initiatives suggest the presence of active social potential (ideas, resources, opportunities for consolidating efforts, etc.) of the population in order to attract the attention of the local community and authorities to their solution. The methodological basis for understanding civil initiatives is possible on the basis of theories of social action (M. Weber), communicative action (J. Habermas), the theory of rational choice (J. Coleman, M. Olson, G. Becker), concepts of sociology of development (F. Budon, R. Burrico, R. Kolen), territorial behavior (A. Yu. Zavalishin). With the help of such a theoretical base, the tasks of eliminating the opposition of macro and micro levels, endowing human economic behavior with socio-cultural characteristics are solved [10].

The initiative involves a new form of social activity, which is based on enterprise and a subjective vision of the problems of the territory. It can be implemented both from its own resources and with the help of the support of the authorities.

Civic initiatives are characterized by a variety of types and forms. They can be systematized on a territorial basis (federal, regional, local), by the number of participants (individual and collective), by duration (short-term, medium-term, long-term), on the availability of program-targeted support (strategic and tactical), on the form of interaction of the local community with the government (cooperation, opposition, neutrality), on the need for financial costs (requiring / not requiring funding), by novelty (based on traditions, innovative), depending on the situation (situational, proactive), by spheres of life (political, economic, domestic, etc.). Forms of civil initiatives are variable: appeals, initiatives and requests to political institutions and public organizations, petitions, protest actions, participation in the discussion of programs for the development of territories, etc.

The interest of power structures in improving livelihoods is manifested in the development of formats for receiving and evaluating citizens' initiatives. Representatives of the authorities of different levels can stimulate the initiative of the population; activate the potential of the «invisible society» by holding a competition of projects, creating electronic platforms for submitting proposals, placing a «social order» for them.

Forms and methods of collecting initiatives can be divided into traditional and innovative ones.

The traditional forms by which the mechanism of consideration and implementation of citizens' will is established are appeals to the authorities: individual and collective letters of appeal, complaints reflecting actual problems of the territory, proposals. Along with these forms, the selection of initiative projects on a competitive basis and the presentation of irrevocable targeted funding from the federal, regional, city budget for socially beneficial projects of citizens and their associations have become traditional. The government creates a regulatory framework, a consolidated budget with financing from business structures, charitable foundations, public organizations, determines directions, tasks, competition terms, evaluation criteria, informs the public and interested organizations in a timely manner, establishes feedback forms. This group includes the already established mechanisms of social order, a social grant of various levels of government, a tender, a competition of social projects, a competition for civil initiatives and public organizations in various nominations, a competition of author's alternative programs, etc.

Currently, new forms and methods of collecting initiatives are being actively disseminated. The process of functioning of the institutions of power and elements of the life-support system stimulates the search for innovative forms of working with civil initiatives, which at the same time become original methods of analysis in studying and systematizing the applications and proposals of citizens to improve the life-support system.

Internet technologies allow any representative of the local community to register on a virtual platform of civil initiatives and report on a problem situation, a possible way to solve it, indicating forms of community participation. The administration of Novokuznetsk of the Kemerovo Region has been implementing this experience for two years. Analysis of the initiatives received on the interactive platform of the city administration showed the themes and significance of the announced initiatives: organization of security of movement for residents (140 calls); landscaping (48 appeals); modernization of the socio-cultural environment (22 initiatives); preservation of cultural heritage (12 initiatives); protection and development of the institution of childhood (10 appeals); protection of the environment and animals (11 hits). Analysis of the number and topics of complaints revealed the following problems. The actual problem for citizens is the organization of the security system. The city dwellers support the improvement of the comfort of moving around the city, advocate the creation of a centralized system of safe life. The population expresses initiatives aimed at transforming and restoring cultural objects of the urban space, which are important for old-timers and beginners. The initiatives described are colored by a sense of emotional attachment to the territory of residence; the justification of the problem is based on the social significance of social change.

Crowdsourcing is the transfer of production and executive functions to an indefinite number of persons on the basis of a public agreement. Crowdsourcing is based on the assumption that we are all creators - artists, scientists, architects and artists, and in any combination. This process promises to reveal the potential of the individual, gives everyone the opportunity to learn more than one profession, new means of creative expression [11]. This is the mobilization of human resources through information technology. The specificity of crowdsourcing is to use a wide range of people, their knowledge, experience and creative potential to solve certain problems. The practice of using this form of interaction between the authorities and the population to improve livelihoods has been tested in many Russian cities. The basis of crowdsourcing is the desire of residents to share their ideas with authorized qualified organizations that can implement the idea based on the initiative proposals of the population. Residents have the opportunity to observe how the process of landscaping is going on, to see progress in real time, to understand where the efforts of the population and the authorities are directed. Representatives of the local community are the experts who control the transformation. Crowdsourcing in the public administration system allows you to move from subject-object to subject-subject relations between government and business, government and population, to provide feedback [12]. Crowdsourcing as a research method is implemented with the help of experts, analysts, moderators.

Participatory budgeting – the practice of initiative budgeting, reflecting the direct participation of citizens in determining and choosing objects of budget spending and the subsequent monitoring of the implementation of selected projects [13]. It consists in the participation of citizens at all stages of project implementation; the distribution of municipal and state budgets; regularity of projects. The experience of using such practices was tested in the cities of Moscow, Cherepovets, Sosnovy Bor (Leningrad Region). The flexibility of these practices allows us to solve the actual problems of municipal management, to soften social stratification, manifestations of civic apathy, and increases the level of trust in the government.

Methods for evaluating initiatives using information technology can be public voting on websites for the most appropriate proposals (projects) for citizens; «Social expertise» with the justification of the choice, etc. The advantages of innovative methods of analyzing civil initiatives are that they are forms of collecting appeals and communicating citizens with the government; stimulate citizens to use virtual and interactive platforms of communication with the authorities to improve the life support system; they contain a fundamental analytical opportunity, when the form of work with citizens becomes at the same time a method for analyzing the opinions of the population. At the same time, it becomes possible to use research methods of quantitative analysis to measure the degree of activity of citizens and qualitative analysis of the content of proposals for improving the life support system.

Innovative forms of gathering civil initiatives have the possibility of interactivity, have a methodical research potential. Restrictions are in the degree of public confidence in local authorities, willingness to cooperate, and involvement in solving problem situations. Methodological limitations are determined by the specifics of the methods of quantitative and statistical analysis, which excludes the possibility of semantic characteristics of civil initiatives and appeals. The potential of

hybrid methodological complexes allows expanding the range of analysis of civil initiatives through the use of « microprobes» methods that measure the degree of emotional tension in solving problems of life improvement, determine the genesis of the problem development and ways to solve it, show the variability of the topics of requests. There is a possibility of complex analysis initiatives. Applying the principles of interdisciplinary approach, the field for different types of expert analysis is expanding. Such an analytical activity presupposes a research platform for specialists in various fields who can substantiate the historical, economic, political, socio-cultural perspective of the development of projects and the initiative activity of citizens.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The use of interdisciplinary types of analysis solves the **methodological task** of creating the architectonics of a complex in which disciplinary methods complement each other. **The conceptual basis** of the complex is interdisciplinarity with a «hybrid» methodological structure. **Methodological support for interpretations** - the theory of understanding sociology (M. Weber), the theory of social action, rational choice, methods of understanding (V. Dilthey), methods of the event approach (event analysis), the multilevel approach, the method of typical cases (W. Thomas, F. Znanetsky), comparative analysis. **Methodical equipment** is a combination of theoretical and applied techniques and disciplinary methods. **Methodical structure** is combinatorial methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis, a combination of micro- and macro-analysis techniques.

The main methods of collecting material of civil initiatives are document analysis, content -analysis, enabling to structure variability of subject headings and initiatives. Working with content -analysis solves the problem of finding quantitative patterns of the content of initiatives using procedures: breakdown of the text and its « macro-sense» for obtaining quantitative parameters; the definition of « units of observation» and units of analysis. Content- analysis is combined with mapping to correlate geographical features with the themes of citizens' appeals. This is a visual display of data, identifying the spatial differentiation of indicators. The use of problem-oriented techniques will allow you to create a «tree» of problems and goals in order of importance, urgency and urgency of the decision. Opinion polls, quantitative data analysis can only partially show a picture of the reality of everyday life.

The fundamental possibility of combining methods provides a qualitative methodology. This is the original « type of research in which the observed behaviors correlate with behavioral strategies of the subject, … the meaning given to them by their actions. The specificity of qualitative sociology is associated primarily with the identification of repetitive forms of human interactions, their understanding and the subjectively believed meaning »[14]. To determine the meanings, content -analysis procedures are combined with the method of understanding, the technique of interpretive reading of texts. While preserving the scale of thematic analysis of citizens' appeals, «microprobes» of a qualitative analysis technician descend into the layers of the sociocultural field,

exploring unique meanings that add human living experience to the empirical base.

The logic of the development of modern methodology drifts towards an integrative understanding of social processes and phenomena, when the combination of micro- and macro levels of analysis, overcoming conflicts of objectivistic and interpretive paradigms, becomes the main methodological approach [15]. Technologies for collecting empirical material in qualitative research are aimed at creating a database of civil initiatives that can be formed for several years. The meaning of the research project is in the typology of unique proposals and initiatives. Technologies for collecting empirical material in qualitative research are aimed at creating a database of civil initiatives that can be formed for several years. The meaning of the research project is in the typology of unique proposals and initiatives.

It is possible to combine the diversity of empirical data and the variability of the themes of civil initiatives on the methodological platform of the event-based approach (event analysis). It is based on the application of an event analysis method, refers to integrated analytical methods that are primarily of a qualitative nature. A unit of scientific analysis is an event filled with meaningful content for a person. This is a special look at civil initiatives and appeals from the position of the dynamics of the situation, its variability, uniqueness and typicality. The focus is on the event diversity, the structure and functions of events, the establishment of event patterns.

Event analysis - an integrative method involving a varying combination of techniques and techniques, is used in the study of events and changes that are in the center of the life process, determining its content and orientation (Yu. M. Reznik. The event is built into the narrative, coordinating the meaning, time, place (P. Ricoeur) [16], which become the basis for typing when dealing with appeals and civil initiatives, form «understood event unity»(G.Simmel). It is possible to have multi-level approach to the analysis of initiatives. The event draws the attention of members of the community and becomes a generator of initiatives and appeals. Analysis of the micro level shows the reflection of events, people's expectations, and the degree of spontaneity or predictability of citizens' behavior. Macro level covers culturally significant aspects of different spheres of community life. The methodical procedure is the application of a comparative analysis of the types of initiatives and appeals to search for synchronization points of resonant and cumulative phenomena, fields of attraction of the interests of subjects. Such points of intersection of eventful levels allow analyzing the sociocultural situation from the position of generalization while preserving the invariance of citizens 'needs and ideas (analysis of documents, sites for citizens' appeals, content analysis, typology method). You can, on the contrary, focus on the micro level (meanings, experiences, reflection, emotional background of appeals) when relating analytical constructs to the cultural and socio-historical framework of the situation. The main method is understanding in the context of historical involvement (G. Simmel). The methodological rules of event analysis are: the unity of personal (subjective), cultural (objective) and communicative (intersubjective) dimensions; the unity of the spatio-temporal organization of life

(connections between events, patterns of connections); unity of elements of the event structure [17].

## IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, methods of collecting and analyzing civilian initiatives to improve livelihoods depend on the strategies and tactics of the interaction of the population with the government. There emerge innovative methods based on information technologies, which increase the possibilities for the population to participate in the discussion and solution of life -support problems. For the evaluation and analysis of civil initiatives a complex of quantitative-qualitative methods is being created. Collecting and analyzing civil initiatives allows timely update the problems and jointly solve them.

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