

Involvement of Inhabitants of the Russian Municipalities in the Initiative Budgeting Practices as a Factor of Civil Activity Intensification

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Abstract—This article analyzes the impact of initiative budgeting practices on the solution of local problems of Russian municipalities, as well as on the consciousness and behavioral models of the population. The research method is traditional analysis of documents, formalized interviewing of residents of municipalities of Tver region (2016-2017), in-depth interviewing of representatives of regional and municipal authorities (2015). The characteristic features of the local initiatives support program as a variant of the initiative budgeting method were identified, directions and rates of development of the program in the Russian regions were analyzed. Social and cultural effects of implementation of initiative budgeting projects related to changes in attitudes and behavioral models of the population of Russian municipalities were studied. It was proved that involvement of citizens in micro-projects has a significant impact on their consciousness and behavioral models. The growth of activist attitudes of the population of municipalities participating in initiative budgeting practices, the growth of trust in public authorities and local self-government, expansion of ideas about the influence of citizens on government activities were identified. Representatives of the population participating in initiative budgeting projects are more focused on implementation of their active and passive electoral rights than citizens who do not participate in these projects. The former express readiness to assist in solving problems of their settlement using their personal resources.

Keywords—*local self-government; local community; initiative budgeting; support program for local initiatives; civil activity*

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, in the conditions of political and economic instability, the problem of finding additional resources (economic, socio-cultural, etc.) for development of the modern Russian society is extremely urgent. Sanctions of Western countries, regular personnel changes in federal, regional and municipal bodies inability of regional authorities and local self-government (LSG) to overcome various local problems, the decline in the standard of living of the population and many other issues require innovative management tools. Self-governing local communities are recognized as one of the most important sources of additional resources for solving the problems of modern societies. The activity of representatives of the local community is extremely important for municipalities. Even the income of the LSG depends on the

mood of the residents. If residents want to work and interact, the tax collection level is higher, which means that local budgets experience fewer problems. In the practice of developing municipalities in various countries, including Russia, one of the key problems is the search for tools to involve the population in solving various local problems. One of the effective activation tools is initiative budgeting practices (IBP) which are widespread in the USA, Asia and Europe. For Russia, where the key problems hindering the development of LSG are insufficient financial security of municipalities and low civil activity, the use of innovative management practices is particularly important. In this regard, it is important to analyze the features of Russian IBPs as well as the nature and depth of their impact on the consciousness and behavior of the population of the Russian regions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various issues of LSG, involvement of citizens in LSG, the use of traditional and innovative tools to solve local problems have been studied by Western and Russian scientists for a long time.

The problem of the LSG was considered by F. Tennis and M. Weber, etc.), assigning the role of LSG to the local community (rural or urban communities) [1; 2, pp. 25-28; 53-62; 340-343]. Researchers developing a modern Western concept of the community (community building) (A. G. Blackwell, R. A. Colmenar, J. P. Kretzmann, J. L. McKnight, M. R. Warren, M. O. Weil, etc.) consider the local community to be a subject of management. It can mobilize domestic resources to solve local and broader social problems (illiteracy, poverty, crime, homelessness, etc.) [3, pp. 15-17]. Modern Russian researchers also tend to note the exceptional role of citizens, residents of rural and urban municipalities, their social activity for development of LSG [4; 5; 6; 7; 8].

Accordingly, one of the most important areas of analysis of the system of LSG developed by Western and Russian scientists, is the study on civil activity of the population, participation of citizens in solving local problems. A number of Western and Russian researchers (R. Darendorf, H. Linz, V. M. Sergeev, M. V. Yakovlev, etc.) consider civil activity as the most important factor of democratic transformations. The concept of civil activity is as close as possible to the concept of political activity and includes organization of public actions

and events, election campaigns, etc. [9, p. 1857]. Another group of scientists differentiates the concepts of civil activity and political activity.

Civilian activity is a form of activities of society, public activities of citizens aimed at implementing universal human rights and freedoms and respective competences – knowledge, skills, and behavioral skills and abilities, achieving (usually in cooperation with other individuals) individual, group and societal goals in the existing institutional environment [10, p. 25]. Some researchers give a broad definition of the "civil activity", defining it as participation of individuals and their associations in the political and social life of society: political actions, election campaigns, movements of "one requirement", volunteer activities, etc. [11, p. 701; 12]. The authors of some publications describing various activities of members of the local community, use the term "civil initiatives". They include a wide range of actions, protests: ecological actions, improvement of the area, repair of houses, actions for preservation of cultural heritage, protection of violated rights, solution of social problems, etc. [13; 14].

As for the analysis of initiative budgeting practices, there is a significant amount of publications on this issue in Russia and abroad. The greatest attention of researchers is paid to the study of the experience of Brazil (Avritzer L., G. Baiocchi, J. Becker, S. Coleman, S. Goncalves, B. Leubolt, Novy A., R. C. Sampaio, C. Souza, B. Wampler), participatory democracy in China (H. Chan, P. Collins, J. Fishkin, B. He, C. Herzberg, R.C. Luskin, Y. Sintomer, A. Siu, R. Traub-Merz, W. Wang, Y. Wu, J. Zhang). At present, due to the fairly wide spread of IBPs in Russia, there are publications analyzing and summarizing the experience of Russian regions involving the population in the budget process [15; 16; 17, p. 113, 120-121; 18; 19; 20; 21].

However, despite the large number of papers devoted to the analysis of initiative budgeting practices, the social effects of the implementation of IB programs and related practices, in particular, the nature of their impact on the civil activity of the population, remain understudied.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SUBJECT

A number of problems of Russian municipalities can be solved by using the mechanism of initiative budgeting. In this regard, the subject of the article is the analysis of the impact of IBPs on the solution of local problems, as well as on the consciousness and behavioral models of the population of municipalities.

The IBPs appeared in 1989 in Porto Alegre (Brazil) as a form of direct democracy, involving citizens in the budget process [22, p. 165; 23, p. 42]. The experience has shown its effectiveness in terms of increasing citizens' participation, in budget processes, promoting responsibility of local authorities [22, p. 159]. The term "initiative budgeting" refers to a set of different (based on civil initiatives) practices for solving local problems with direct participation of citizens in determining the objects of budget expenditure and the subsequent control over project implementation [22, p. 159; 23, pp. 42-43]. Currently, the local initiatives support program (LISP) as the most large-scale and technologically developed IBP is widely

spread in Russia. According to the monitoring of project implementation carried out by the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, by the end of 2017, 50 subjects of the Russian Federation (out of 85) were involved in initiative budgeting (Vologda, Kirov, Nizhny Novgorod, Tver, Yaroslavl, Ulyanovsk regions, Stavropol and Khabarovsk krais, the Republic of Bashkortostan, North Ossetia-Alania, Sakha-Yakutia, etc.). In 2016, 35 regions of the Russian Federation implemented 8732 projects, their total cost amounted to about RUB 7 billion [18, p. 110-111].

The implementation of IBPs requires scientific analysis and understanding. Accordingly, this article explores the features of LISP in the conditions of budget deficiency of Russian municipalities and low activities of Russian citizens. The main stages of IBP implementation in municipalities are described, the types of projects are analyzed. Their content and directions depend on the list of powers of the Russian municipalities regulated by law. The dynamics of quantitative indicators of IBP implementation at the regional level is investigated. Special attention is paid to statistical substantiation of social and cultural effects of IBP implementation associated with changes in consciousness and behavioral models of the population of municipalities. The article studies the influence of participation of citizens in IBP implementation on the level of their trust in government structures, their activist attitudes, their electoral activities, their activity in solving local problems.

IV. RESEARCH PURPOSE, TASKS, AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of the article is to identify directions and nature of the impact of initiative budgeting practices (IBP) on the attitudes and behavior of residents of municipalities of Tver region.

The main research tasks are as follows:

- 1) to identify features of the program to support local initiatives as a variant of the IB technology;
- 2) to analyze development directions for local initiative support programs in the Russian regions;
- 3) to investigate social and cultural effects of IBP implementation associated with changes in attitudes and behavioral models of the population of Russian municipalities.

The following hypotheses were formulated:

- 1) in the conditions of low resources of Russian municipalities and predominance of ethnic political culture, the use of IB technology depends on the federal (regional) budget and administrative and managerial methods of interaction with the population.
- 2) development of initiative budgeting practices in Russian municipalities is accompanied by the growth of both quantitative and qualitative indicators: the number of municipalities involved in these processes is growing, the range of issues solved with the help of IBPs is expanding, the share of financial contribution of local communities to IB project implementation is growing.

3) involvement of residents of Russian municipalities in IB project implementation has a significant impact on their attitudes and behavioral models: there is an increase in activist attitudes, increased trust in public authorities and local authorities, changes in motivation and nature of citizens' participation in municipal activities.

The need for solving these problems and testing hypotheses determined our research methods.

V. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in one of the typical regions of Central Russia – Tver region. By its territory (82,2 thousand km²), Tver region is the largest region in the Central Federal district. According to the state statistics as of January 1, 2017, the number of permanent residents of the region amounted to 1296799 people [24]. The region has 304 municipalities, including 32 municipal districts, 11 city districts (including 4 newly formed urban districts with rural population and 2 closed administrative-territorial entities, 40 urban and 221 rural settlements. Since 2013, in urban and rural settlements of Tver region, and since 2016, in urban districts, under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance of Tver region, the LISP has been successfully implemented.

The research was conducted by the research team of the Department of sociology and social technologies of Tver State Technical University. Empirical research materials were formed using a number of methodological procedures.

First, the traditional analysis of the following groups of documents was carried out:

1) Materials posted on the official website of the Tver region IBP (<http://ppmi.tverfin.ru/Home>).

2) IBP materials posted on the website of the Ministry of Finance of Tver region (<https://минфин.твeрскаяобласть.рф/деятельность-министерства/mezhyudzhetye-otnosheniya/index.php?ID=88717>).

3) Documents, statistics, financial information of the Ministry of Finance of Tver region.

Second, from April to August 2015, in-depth interviewing of experts was being conducted. 45 people were interviewed. They were selected by their places of work and positions. The study presents the following expert groups:

1) representatives of regional authorities (the legislative Assembly of Tver region, the government of Tver region) - 4 people;

2) representatives of the media and non-profit organizations - 4 people;

3) representatives of municipal authorities (heads of administrations) of municipal districts, urban districts, urban and rural settlements, members of representative bodies of municipalities) – 37 people.

Recruitment of respondents was carried out by the snowball method. The information was collected by means of an expert interview form including key questions on the subject of the study to focus the respondents on the issue.

Third, within the sociological monitoring conducted by the authors from 2009 to 2017, aimed at analyzing the dynamics of the ideas of the residents of Tver region about the IBP and identifying the self-government potential of the population, social effects of IBP implementation (including civil activities of the population) were studied. The object of the study were residents of municipalities aged 18 years and older. The method of empirical data collection is formalized interviewing. In 2016, the volume of the sample was 1043 people, in 2017 - 1099 people (the statistical error was 4%). A representative sample was formed by quotas (gender, age, type of settlement). Information was collected annually during June and July. The results were processed by creating an electronic database and using basic descriptive statistics in SPSS 16.0.

VI. RESEARCH RESULTS

A. IBP implementation methods in Tver region

In Tver region, the LISP implemented in 2013 and the technology of its implementation has a number of features. One of them is implementation of financing of micro – projects within the system of inter-budgetary relations of the region and municipalities. Funds for project implementation involving are grants for leveling the budget supply of residential settlements and balancing local budgets. Accordingly, IBP implementation does not require additional regional budget expenditures. Projects are funded from several main sources: the regional budget (not more than 700 thousand rubles for 1 rural settlement project and not more than 800 thousand rubles for 1 urban settlement project), the municipal budget (not less than 10% of the amount of the subsidy requested for the micro-project), funds allocated by representatives of the local community (for settlements – not less than 5%, for urban districts – not less than 10% of the subsidy volume). On a competitive basis, the regional budget allocates a subsidy for IBP funding. Financial resources from all other sources are voluntary donations (including co-financing by local businesses and the public). At the same time, one of the main principles of the IBP is contribution of the population to co-financing of micro-projects. The contribution of the population (as well as contributions of other local participants of the project) can be monetary and non-monetary (for example, preparation of the object, earthworks, garbage collection, landscaping, protection of the object, etc.).

The whole cycle of IB project implementation is one year. This approach motivates participants to be more active and effective. In addition, implementation of the entire complex of works within one construction season reduces the project cost. IB projects are implemented in several stages:

1) IB school: an educational component of the project (this is one more important feature of IB project implementation in Tver region). Participants of the program attend training seminars in October. Training seminars are organized by the Ministry of Finance of Tver region.

2) A general meeting of residents of a settlement. During this meeting, the citizens determine a priority project, set the

amount of money they are ready to invest in co-financing of the micro-project, determine their abilities to make non-monetary contribution, and choose an initiative group whose tasks are to collect funds and monitor project implementation.

3) registration of a tender application which includes: description of the project, the protocol of the general meeting of local residents (which confirms the amount of monetary and non-monetary contribution), design and estimate documentation and other materials. The application is made by the administration of the settlement.

4) competition of applications which is carried out by regional authorities. The selection criteria are maximum openness and transparency. They stimulate settlements which are most active in solving local problems, funding projects that are priority for residents of settlements.

5) obtaining a right to the regional subsidy, allocation of the subsidy.

6) implementation of IB projects by settlements and urban districts: selection of contractors, control over their activities, acceptance of the executed works on the project. The initiative group and local residents are directly involved in works monitoring and evaluation.

7) grand opening of the finished object attended by residents, the head of the municipality, local administration, representatives of regional authorities.

B. IBP dynamics for Tver region

The analysis of the dynamics of LISG indicators in Tver region shows an annual increase in the number of municipalities participating in the program (in 2018, the decline is due to a decrease in the number of municipalities). There is an increase in the numbers of applications submitted and winning projects allowed to be implemented. In general, an increase in the number of projects requires an increase in the funds allocated for their implementation. However, in the structure of financial support, the share of regional subsidies decreases, and the share of local co-financing, on the contrary, increases. It is significant that the share of municipal funds has not changed (it is about 30%), and the growth of local co-financing is due to an increase in the contribution of the population which increased twice from 2013 to 2018. Thus, from 2013 to 2018, 171.8 million rubles were allocated to solve local problems in Tver region, of which 140.2 million rubles were the funds of the population (Table I).

As a result, by the end of 2018, 1026 social objects of public infrastructure – children's and sports grounds, street lighting, landscaping, fire safety, baths, mass recreation places, houses of culture, roads, water pipelines, memorials, burial places, etc. - were repaired or re-created in Tver region under the LISP.

The analysis of the dynamics of types of IB projects carried from 2013 to 2018 demonstrates a gradual shift from improvement projects to projects aimed at building and repairing important infrastructure facilities (water supply, roads, lighting, etc.).

At present, LISG is developing and improving. Since 2017, 6 urban districts of Tver region have been participating in micro-projects. The implementation of comprehensive programs for strategic development of rural settlements which are formed with participation of local communities as a part of the LISG program (milk collection points for local farmers, purchase of a tractor, etc.) is being stimulated.

TABLE I. DYNAMICS OF LISP INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE OF TVER REGION

Indicators / Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total number of participants (municipalities)	71 rural and urban settlements	151 rural and urban settlements	176 rural and urban settlements	182 rural and urban settlements and 1 Urban district	180 rural and urban settlements and 6 Urban districts	157 rural and urban settlements and 6 Urban districts
Share of participants in the total number of regional municipalities	21%	44%	53%	57%	57%	57%
Total number of applications	71	151	222	250	289	290
The number of implemented projects (winners of the competition)	53	93	168	211	237	264
Regional subsidy (million rub.)	25.0 (56.8%)	56.6 (54.3%)	95.9 (55.1%)	102.7 (52.2%)	101.8 (49.9%)	124.3 (53.0%)
Co-funding (million rub), including	19.0 (43.2%)	47.6 (45.7%)	79.1 (45.4%)	94.1 (47.8%)	102.3 (50.1%)	110.3 (47.0%)
Local budget (million rub)	13.3 (30.2%)	30.0 (28.8%)	45.1 (25.9%)	59.1 (30.0%)	65.3 (32.0%)	67.1 (28.6%)
Contribution of the population and sponsors (million rub)	4.2 (9.5%)	13.5 (12.9%)	26.1 (15.0%)	29.0 (14.7%)	31.9 (15.6%)	35.5 (15.1%)
Other sources (million rub)	2.0 (4.5%)	4.0 (3.8%)	6.9 (4.0%)	6.0 (3.0%)	5.1 (2.5%)	7.6 (3.2%)
Total project cost (million rub)	44.0	104.3	174.1	196.8	204.1	234.6

C. Social effects of IBP implementation in Tver region

The scientific literature notes that IBPs have a range of social, economic and institutional positive effects. Among them are: increasing transparency of the use of budget funds, involvement of citizens in solving their problems and development of the local community as a whole, eliminating well-fare mentality of the population, identifying and solving the most important local problems, effective public control, improving living standards, etc. One of the most important social effects is an increase in the level of mutual trust between the population and the government, as well as the growth of civil activity. The results of sociological research conducted by the authors are indicative.

The results of sociological surveys show that citizens taking part in the IBPs demonstrate a higher level of trust in the local bodies (compared to "non-participating" residents) (Fig. 1). They perceive their relations with local authorities

(the head of the settlement, municipality administration, etc.) as a partnership and believe that municipal authorities are able to protect them and defend their interests.

At the same time, the level of trust in the bodies implementing IB projects (for example, the head of the municipality, the municipality administration, the municipal Council, the Government of Tver region) is twice higher than that of "non-participating" citizens.

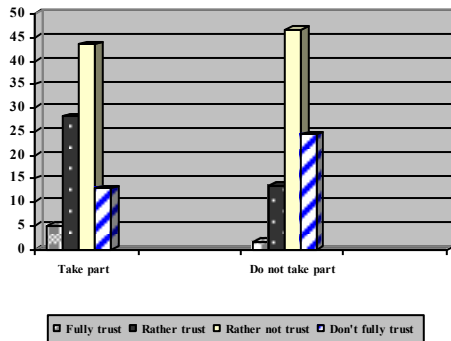


Fig. 1. Dependence of citizens' trust in LSG bodies on their participation in IBPs (2017, %)

The higher level of trust in local authorities, which is characteristic of citizens participating in IBPs is reflected in the nature and intensity of their civic activities. They demonstrate activist attitudes believing that their activities improve the situation in the municipality. These respondents are much more oriented to apply their knowledge, skills, organizational skills, use their personal time and financial resources to solve common problems (Fig. 2).

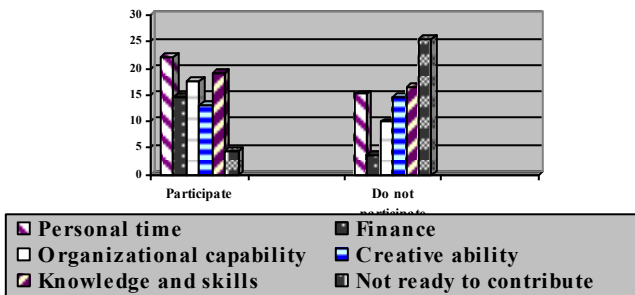


Fig. 2. Dependence of the readiness of citizens to solve municipal problems on participation in IB projects (2017, %)

The study showed that respondents participating in initiative budgeting projects are more active in municipal elections than citizens who do not participate in the IBPs (in 2016 – 29% and 18.2%, respectively). Among the reasons encouraging participation of active respondents in local elections are "social debt", "interest in elections", "tradition", "importance of elections for the country." It is significant that among the reasons for the refusal to exercise their active right to vote ("lack of time", "lack of information"), there is no such a reason as "distrust of the elections" (unlike the group of "non-participating" citizens).

In addition, the categories of citizens involved in the IBPs also demonstrate a greater willingness to exercise passive suffrage compared to groups of "non-participating" respondents. Thus, about a third of the residents of the municipalities of Tver region participating in the IBPs (from 26.9% in 2016 to 30.8% in 2017) expressed their readiness to be local deputies (for comparison: among the "non – participating" population, only 6.6% in 2016 and 7.4% in 2017 were ready to exercise their passive electoral right in 2017).

These categories of the population see the reasons for passivity in solving local problems in a different way. Thus, active respondents consider the reluctance to take responsibility and the lack of financial opportunities to carry out public activities as main reasons for low civil activity of the population. Non-participating citizens pay attention to social passivity as a lack of interest of people in public activity, impossibility to influence anything, demonstrate well-fare mentality.

Tver experts (representatives of state and municipal authorities) note positive social effects of IBPs. Thus, they point out that when implementing micro-projects, citizens' trust in the municipal authorities increases, their confidence grows and they influence the solution of problems in their municipality: "people believed that something can be done... money is collected" (the head of the administration of Likhoslavl district of Tver region). From the point of view of the expert community of the region, implementation of IB projects contributes to activation of the local population, involvement of citizens in solving local problems, reduction of dependent moods: "...people understand that there are two ways for repairing the house of culture: to participate in it, and to write a letter and wait for someone to do everything." (an employee of the Ministry of Finance of Tver region). In addition, the LISG allows members of the local community to consolidate: "it unites the initiative of the population, the local bodies and businesses, people" (the head of Bely). Tver experts believe that IB microprojects contribute to partnerships of local authorities and population, "help establish a dialogue between the government and residents, establish relationships based on the civic engagement of people" (the head of the rural settlement of Oleninsk district).

VII. CONCLUSION

The study showed that in the conditions of poor resources of Russian municipalities and predominance of the elements of ethnic political culture, initiative budgeting relies on the federal (regional) budget and administrative and managerial methods of interaction with the population. One of the research hypotheses was proved. Initiative budgeting practices are initiated by regional and municipal authorities. The organization of citizens' training, public meetings, preparation of tender documents and other procedures are often carried out with the use of administrative resources. Nevertheless, the study shows the successful and intensive development of initiative budgeting practices in Russian municipalities, the growth of quantitative and qualitative LISG indicators. Especially important are the indicators related to the increase in the number of projects aimed at solving local problems, development of income-generating projects, growth of the

share of financial contribution of local communities. Therefore, one more hypothesis was proved. The third hypothesis was proved using statistical data. Involvement of citizens in project implementation has a significant impact on their consciousness and behavioral models. There was an increase in activist attitudes of the population of Tver municipalities participating in the IBPs, the growth of trust in public authorities and LSG, expansion of ideas about the ability of citizens to influence power authorities. People who take part in IB projects exercise their active and passive electoral right, express their readiness to assist in solving local problems, use their personal resources.

In general, the experience of Tver region shows the effectiveness of using initiative budgeting in solving local problems and increasing civil activity of the population. LISG focuses on a direct economic effect and contributes to positive social changes, formation of new activist mental and behavioral attitudes of the population of municipalities.

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