



Civil Associations as Subjects of Socio-Legal Control in the Regional Community

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: In the Russian society the problem of socio-legal control acquires a current sense, as it is obvious that the state-centered matrix of socio-legal control has become obsolete, does not conform to the complexity of the modern organizational and legal processes, and is insufficient in development of feedback with queries, expectations, and requirements of various social groups. **Methodology:** As to selection of the methodology of the research, it is possible to suppose that the procedures of structural & functional and institutional approaches belong to the process of determinants of socio-legal control. The research methodology also envisages foundation on the principles of limited universality and target rationality, which characterizes the level of mobilization of the organic potential of the regional community. **Results:** The authors note that civil associations pass from the model of critical “observation” and confrontation with government institutes at the level of implementation of the function of socio-legal control to usage of the model of civil and public partnership, which is proved by creation of the Russian umbrella public structures that is to unify various civil associations for socio-legal control. As Russia is the country of regions, civil associations, as subjects of socio-legal control in regional community are to ensure transparency of policy making at the regional level and implement public hearings and public expertise of activities of regional management. However, there are objective limitations in the form of insufficient resources of civil associations and subjective limitations in the form of lack of legal professionalism and legal initiative. **Perspective civil associations, as subjects of socio-legal control in regional community, are determined by horizons of activities and common goals and interests on the basis of constructive cooperation with state structures in actualization of the procedures of participation in evaluation of the normative and legal correspondence of the activities of government institutes for developing effective feedback with regional community.** **Applications of this study:** The results obtained will allow a better orientation in the space of social and legal transformations occurring in modern Russia and predict the situation in the social reproduction of Russian society from the point of view of the prospects for its legal development. **Novelty/Originality of this study:** The research methodology envisages the model of socio-legal control as the sphere of mandatory participation of civil institutes, according to their organizational structure, system of rules and goals, and that civil institutes in a regional community are oriented at implementing their own principles and ideas for expanding the opportunities of representation and expression of the interests of groups that are not satisfied with the positions of social observation or passive adaptation.

Keywords: Socio-Legal Control, Civil Associations, Government Institutes, Regional Community, Public Expertise, Equal Partnership.

1 Introduction

Socio-legal control, as activities connected monitoring, evaluation, and diagnostics of the results of activities of government institutes according to the forms and goals based on the legal, organizational, and information procedures, is the constituent factor of consolidation and development of regional community as a social space of interaction of various groups with the system of regional management,

outside of which institutional trust of society is scarce and social development cannot be predicted (3,26).

Besides, socio-legal control in the Russian society is traditionally set by the state-centered matrix, based on acknowledgment of the role of government institutes in implementation of control functions at the formal, executive, and administrative levels (17). It is meant that the main result of social transformations in the Russian society is that the structural, institutional, and subject changes in a historically short period of time created a completely new socio-legal order, but also confirmed the tradition of foundation on the state as a guarantor and social transformations and stability of social institutes (Russia: a transforming society, 2001, 16).

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This conclusion was made due to weakness of the horizontal social ties and absence of proved preconditions of civil society and self-sufficient personality. In other words, based on negative statements, V.A. Yadov, made a conclusion that Russia is to take the path of formation, development, and accumulation of authority of civil society (32). In this sense, it is interesting that civil society in Russia is manifested in non-classic forms, which is confirmed by the factor of social volunteering and voluntary participation of fourteen million Russians in various social events (help and support for family and childhood, liquidation of consequences of anthropogenic and natural disasters, development and implementation of youth creative projects, formation of the culture of historical memory, preservation of cultural and historical heritage, and socio-ecological initiatives). A “narrow” spot is the legal direction, in which human rights organizations, which have organizational background, skilled legal personnel, and experience of interaction with transnational public structures, are rather strong.

However, the problem of socio-legal control is seen in evaluation of the quality of social management – especially, for the regional and local levels, monitoring of implementation of government target programs from civil society, and observation of law and order in the context of social audit and evaluation of managerial decisions. In other words, development of consolidated position of government institutes and civil society as to the sphere of competence and implementation of socio-legal control the demand for which in the Russian society is obvious.

The thing is that the human rights “sector” works according to the scheme of human rights protection and focuses in the legal and political sphere, and, from this point of view, the perspectives of development of socio-legal control might not be optimistic. At the same time, an important aspect for understanding this process in the Russian society could be presence of objective preconditions for integration of civil associations as the groups that are oriented at representation and implementation of the interests of a regional community in the system of socio-legal control. At the all-Russia level, the umbrella-type structure the All-Russia People's Front, which works in close interaction with the institute of presidency, and allows for effective monitoring of execution of the decisions of the highest political management of the country, has been rather successful. The All-Russia People's Front allows for cooperation between social volunteers and government institutes, as the All-Russia People's Front has formed channels of the legal, information, and social influence on analysis and assessment of activities of government structures (the All-Russia People's Front participates in control over the results of tenders (systems of government purchases) at the all-Russia and regional levels, conducts public control over implementation of 20% of targeted projects, and uses public expertise to regulate the conflicts in the sphere of socio-labor relations.

Hence the corridor of opportunities for actions of civil institutes in the sphere of socio-legal control and, without denying the reproduction of the state-centered matrix, it is possible to speak of actualization and articulation of civil associations as subjects of socio-legal control in the Russian society. Considering the fact that Russia is the country of regions, significance of socio-legal control in socio-cultural

modernization of the Russian society is determined by development and vertically integrated system, which acts according to the scheme of “coordinating centers”, and horizontal social ties of regional community as a system of interaction of socially and economically active groups in the regional space.

In the existing social reality, the Russian society requires stability in the context of internal and external challenges.

An important factor that determines perception of situation in the country is the position of civil society, which has a diversified structure at the regional level. It should be emphasized that socio-legal control as a vector of activities of civil society envisages diversity of organizational forms and a certain level of civil activity and civil culture; it is necessary to mention the interconnection between the quality of socio-legal control and the model of relations between government institutes and civil associations, as the sense of socio-legal control as joint activities consists in realization of belonging to the common goals and interests that are implemented in the system of social management in which regional management and activities of the government institutes on reproduction and development of socio-legal order seem to be organically set in the priorities of social management by the conditions of adequate implementation of socio-legal control as a sphere of social and public partnership at the regional level.

2 Methodology

It is possible to state that Russian researchers focus on the potential of subjectivity of civil associations on implementation of socio-legal control in regional community as a capability to influence on implementation of the main directions of regional policy on the basis of implementation of the legal acts for expanding representation and expressing the interests of various groups of the regional community. Based on this, there appears the need for determining the conceptual and applied scheme of the research that can construct theoretical landmarks oriented at increase of sociological authenticity of the results.

Also, it envisages not the cancelling of description of civil associations at the stage of formation of socio-legal control and strong influence of external limitations but determining the basic conditions for including civil associations in the regional community into the system of socio-legal control. In this sense, one cannot “return to the past” and seek restoration of “people’s control”, which does not conform to the changed structural and institutional parameters in development of regional community in the Russian society.

That’s why during analysis of possible directions the research choice is predetermined by the argument of elaboration of conceptual tools and empirical identification of the described social reality. Here the provisions of the structural & functional and institutional approaches are rather interesting; they explain the existing situation of socio-legal control as a rather “closed” procedure in the context of communicative infrastructure and schemes of government and civil institutes. It is possible to distinguish several specific characteristics of civil institutes of regional community. Firstly, the factor of regional self-sufficiency – “density” of communication in the regional elite groups and high level of informal (interpersonal) contacts lead to the fact that socio-legal control is the procedure of “coordinated

results” and a common position of the subjects of regional community in refusing “quick changes” in the system of regional management. Secondly, the quality of socio-legal control over civil institutes is influenced by the factor of government support, which naturally reduces the possibility of actions with a risk of confrontation between government institutes and civil associations. Thirdly, there is a factor of “rumors”, which causes a lot of ambiguous interpretations, which deforms the understanding of socio-legal control as an important procedure of achievement of convention between government institutes and civil associations in the sphere of evaluation of the legal aspect of adopted managerial decisions.

As to selection of the methodology of the research, it is possible to suppose that the procedures of structural & functional and institutional approaches belong to the process of determinants of socio-legal control (2,16,18,20,22,27). This means that civil institutes form in a specific regional environment and cannot be described outside of the existing objective conditions of life of regional community. In other words, it is impossible to expect authenticity of sociological information without consideration of the existing configuration of the subjects of regional community, effective formal and informal institutional mechanisms, the existing model of regional management, and the tradition of participation of the civil associations of a regional community in socio-legal control.

The activity approach has the advantage of transition from description of determinants of socio-legal control to analysis of discourse, organization, and action. Socio-legal control in regional community is group actions aimed at implementation on the basis of the systemic usage of the legal, organizational, and information resources as a method of changing own positions in a regional community, development of common interests and goals within formation of symbolic identities, and articulation of socio-legal control in the discourse of communication between regional community and government institutes.

The problem of civil associations, as subjects of socio-legal control in a regional community, is brought down to frameworks of studying the objective, structural, and institutional parameters in the above approaches, while the activity approach focuses on the acting subject and groups of the regional community that get involved in the process of socio-legal control on the basis of collective intentionality to influence on regional policy and regional management. The research criteria are, firstly, the level of social mobilization of regional community and readiness for actions that stimulate socio-legal control; secondly, organizational preparation on the consolidation basis; thirdly, striving to become an important and independent subject of the regional community in which socio-legal control is presented as a position on the path of increase of influence on life and development of the regional community. These criteria would be incomplete without the fact that civil associations, as subjects of socio-legal control in the regional community, are peculiar for assessment of resources and opportunities and for that which group that wants to participate (directly or indirectly) in socio-legal control actually is.

It is important to explain that the research methodology envisages the model of socio-legal control as the sphere of mandatory participation of civil institutes, according to their organizational structure, system of rules and goals, and that

civil institutes in a regional community are oriented at implementing their own principles and ideas for expanding the opportunities of representation and expression of the interests of groups that are not satisfied with the positions of social observation or passive adaptation. The activity approach envisages studying civil associations as social subjects, which determines connection to socio-legal control in the context of the initiating and resonant managing impact, i.e., determination of the consequences of socio-legal control for social diagnostics of activities of government institutes (31).

The research methodology also envisages foundation on the principles of limited universality and target rationality, which characterizes the level of mobilization of the organic potential of the regional community.

3 Results

Civil society is a popular topic of the Russian sociological thought, which, however, contains conceptual “understatements”. The Russian society entered the stage of development and creation of all-Russia socio-political and cultural space of the Russian sociological thought, which shows the organic connection between the civil institutes, development of democracy and market economy, and establishment of the legal state (19). It is obvious that the age of “excessive” regional sovereignization is already in the past, but, at the same time, it is possible to see insufficiency and one-sidedness of vertically integrated ties, which allow ensuring integrity and security of the society and state but require transition to the model of mutual responsibility and to opposing motion “top-down and bottom-up” in implementation of socio-legal control.

It should be emphasized that discussion between “citizen-centered” and “state-centered” is fixed within the studied problem. This scheme is obviously relative and reminds the Weber’s “ideal types” as structural and institutional invariants that find the “signs of influence” in the system of socio-legal control.

Supporters of “state-centered” approach substantiate the provision of the leading and decisive role of government institutes in implementation of socio-legal control in the Russian society, referring to the state as an institute and image that embodies continuity and guarantee of public development; to preservation of institutional trust to the institutes of order that are to implement systemic functions; to insufficient resources of civil associations that limit the opportunities of participation in the process of monitoring of social control and decision making under the influence of civil. The “civil-centered” approach has its origins in the reality of civil society in Russia, which, with differences from the normative foreign models, has developed not logically but historically, being involved in various regional socio-cultural contexts.

The modern author I.A. Khaliy emphasizes that a new impulse to civil society are given by public movements as institutes of representation or expression of interests of various social groups (9,10). Bases on this provision, it is stated that civil associations are objectively included in the process of socio-legal control, as they form and develop in specific socio-legal conditions, and that socio-legal control is a precondition of accumulation of organizational, prestigious, and information resources. It is important to be able to formulate specific requirements and goals, based on shifting

responsibility for socio-legal control on civil institutes. While in 1990's civil associations were used for analysis and evaluation of the activities of government institutes from time to time, and only the civil structures that showed signs and proofs of strength and activity were concerned, formation of a wide specter of civil initiatives determines the vector of subjectivity of civil associations in the practices of socio-legal control. Against this background, it is possible to determine the conditions of transition to organizational development and overcome the "spirit of enlightenment and criticism". The setting on development of socio-legal control as a tool of social audit of state structures and responsibility of civil society in the process of achievement of stability and security is outlines in substantiation of leadership of civil associations in implementation of socio-legal control in various spheres of life of a regional community.

As a matter of fact, the presented sociological literature on the analyze problem distinguishes three levels of conceptual consideration and understanding. The first level is connected to the structural and functionalist treatment, in which socio-legal control is determined by priorities of the societal sphere (14,23,25). They agree that socio-legal control belongs to the sphere of activities of government institutes in regional community, which undergoes the changes connected to socio-spatial and socio-territorial identification and search for the way of socio-innovational development of regions; however, introduction of social reflection into the activities of government institutes does not cancel treatment of socio-legal control as the procedure of self-control, oriented at "impeccability" of decisions. Civil associations of a regional community are to ensure "increase of authenticity" of results, emphasizing the connection to the regional models of management, real human potential, and regional resources and preferences.

The institutional approach, which is implemented in the works (6,12), aims at understanding the problem of socio-legal activities of civil associations of a regional community in the context of adaptation of civil institutes to the existing institutional environment of the Russian society. According to the Russian supporters of institutionalism, it is important to understand the limits and conditions of the "window of possibilities" of civil associations in influencing the models of activities of government structures through determination of the correspondence of the institutional (formal and legal) norms and mechanisms and results of activities – especially, in the public & legal and political & legal spheres.

Considering civil associations within the movement from the traditionalist regional community to a more complex community, which ensures the interests of socially active groups in access to resources of control, it is possible to determine the growing asymmetrical complexity of the system of socio-legal control. Thus, attention is paid to the character of interaction between government institutes of socio-legal control and civil associations in the model of "situational monitoring". These initial positions form the concept of "postponed action" and return to the problem of competence of regional civil society and to the situation when apart from the imposed institutional limitations in which hierarchy of the institutes as to the criteria of "possession of control", the level of implementation/ non-implementation of the goals of civil associations is important. It seems that supporters of institutionalism have trust in predetermination of institutional conditions and mechanisms

that form transfer of activity of the regional community in the sphere of socio-legal control.

The path of formation of such scheme is found in stating the traditionalism of regional community and priority of "closed access" to the resources of socio-legal control. By the way, this approach is supported by I.A. Khaliy, who sees the "authoritarianism" of the institutional environment in the regions, which slows down the possibility of civil innovations in the sphere of socio-legal control (9,10). A debatable aspect is supporters of institutionalism adopting (in the "unarticulated" way) the factor of state's help, support, and stimulation for civil associations in the relative implementation of claims for socio-legal control, when in the context of the normative model of the neo-institutional approach the real condition is formation of the social contract, based on mutual obligations of the subjects of socio-legal control, adoption of certain rules of social regulation, and avoidance of conflict situations.

The basic research of socio-legal control over civil institutes of regional community is conducted primarily in the aspect of determining the similarity of socio-legal and social control from civil society, which is emphasized in the works (1,24,33). The role of civil associations as subjects of socio-legal control in a regional community is qualified within the model of constructive "opposition", expressed in the fact that civil associations are assigned subjectivity as an ability to occupy autonomous positions in the sphere of socio-legal control with stimulation of increase of effectiveness of regional management as the function of government institutes, based on introduction of the procedures of hierarchy of goals of management and the chances of their implementation, intensity of legal consultation regarding the decisions, and establishment of so called "public management", determined by making of managerial decisions according to demands of the regional community.

Based on the above, it is possible to formulate the provision that civil associations, as subjects of socio-legal control in a regional community, are studied in two aspects: firstly, according to the logic of establishment of civil society in Russia, and, secondly, regionalization and inclusion of civil institutes into the life of a regional community as to criteria of the model of interrelations between regional authorities and civil institutes, resource provision of civil institutes as to the level of social and professional capital and quality of human capital in the region.

This position explains the "shift" in the research literature on this problem, which is connected to differentiation of the general regional space. Unlike econometrics, which divides regions according to the criteria of profitability, taxation, and share in the country's GDP, sociological approach is determined by the institutional factors (democratization, openness, ability for social integration, and access to public resources)..

Within the "subject" paradigm, civil institutes of regional community are described at the totality of the models of behavior, which include setting at rational ideas of civil groups in expected consequences of their interaction with the corresponding managerial structures. Hence the attention of the Russian researchers S.G. Kirdina, A.A. Khagurova, O.V. Kravchuk and E.I. Volkova to the role of civil institutes, treated as civil associations and public movements, in implementation of social programs of regional development. Emphasis is made on strategies in the sphere of socio-legal

control, in which the current problems are the sphere of state purchases, audit of financial expenditures for social programs, and inspection of the activities of structures that ensure social infrastructure of the region (8,11,13). The researchers also pay attention to the new direction of socio-legal control that is connected to ecological, residential, and gender problems.

Thus, it is possible to speak that the array of research literature on this problem is diverse, but it still preserves the “non-sovereign” scheme of socio-legal control from civil associations in a regional community. This provision is determined by the setting of vertical integration in the activities of government institutes, which excludes division of the sphere of competence between government institutes and civil associations, for civil associations of a regional community in the sphere of socio-legal control have insufficient initiative in independence decisions, work in the regime of “looking back at central structures” or within the limits set by the regional authorities.

4 Discussion

The sphere of socio-legal control in a regional community is characterized mainly by application of the administrative and legal procedures by the structures that have legal competence; as a result, 35,000 government structures have the authority to perform inspection and control. The system of management at the regional level contains the mechanisms of institutional self-reproduction, and socio-legal control is aimed at preservation of stability of managerial influence on the regional community. According to the Russian researchers, the managerial and political component was actually created by “mandatory” institutes (15). The result is, firstly, implementation of the model of socio-legal control, which could be qualified as vertically integrated and oriented at domination-sub-domination on the career ladder. Thus, civil associations are treated as “outside”, without the sufficient level of trust and professionalism for interferences in the system of management. Secondly, institutional preconditions of socio-legal control in a regional community are formed within the formal and legal norms and “sovereignty” and responsibility of the management systems before itself, which determines imbalance in the relations between government and civil structures in which the legal mechanism are concentrated in the pole of power. Thirdly, specifics of regional community in the Russian general regional space consist in the fact that socio-legal control is compared to the image of regional authorities, their power and closeness to the federal center. There appears an opinion that the scales and goals of socio-legal control are connected to the criterion of loyalty of the regional elite and to the level of work of public authorities at the regional level from the point of view of benefit for implementation of the tasks that are set by the center.

Another important aspect, connected to the fact that the possibilities of socio-legal control in a regional community are narrowed down as to the federal social programs and projects in which the system of management at the regional level performs the role of a referral agent consists in the following. Leaving aside the prejudice that regional community is peculiar for traditionalism and socio-cultural underrun, one must acknowledge that in regional community civil structures are guarantors of more effective and socially expedient interaction with government institutes.

The South Russian region is interesting due to the fact that with the model indicators of socio-economic development and socio-demographic dynamics within the regional space the differences in the approaches to socio-legal control from civil associations are manifested. The reason is not just rootedness (or not) of civil society and insufficiency of experience of interaction with government institutes. Other very important factors are resource provision, professionalism, energy, and purposefulness – i.e., creation of consolidated society and the capability to pose as an independent social force.

In 1990’s, the South Russian region became the space of socio-political turbulence – i.e., felt the influence of the crisis phenomena in the socio-economic life – and had the movements that were strange as compared to the official public and political mainstream (Cossack, ethnic, anarchist), which acted in the regime of “negative” democracy. In this context, socio-legal control was interpreted for the purpose of “gaining power” and was reproduces in the form of tough opposition to the existing government institutes. The Russian researcher V.G. Fedotova, emphasizing the Russian society’s undergoing the period of anarchy, noted the manifestation of anarchist tendencies connected to weakness of regional authorities and absence of coordination of the federal and regional authorities (7).

The destructive influence for the Southern Russia’s regional community was the lack of social institutes and conflict of identities, which complicated the development of mature civil associations. “Non-civil” communities, claiming to express interests of the marginal groups of population, used the mottoes of populism and street democracy and were a barrier on the path of development of the system of socio-legal control. In order to understand socio-legal control in a regional community not as a state but as a movement toward the social order, one can “build” the criteria of civil associations as subjects of socio-legal control. Social mobilization of civil associations of Southern Russia’s regional community was weak against the background of the capital’s centers, but is also had its specific features in the traditions of self-organization and self-regulation, connected to concentration of intellectual capital (high share of scientific intelligence and workers of the sphere of education, intensity of contacts with public structures in Moscow and St. Petersburg, creation of proto-civil associations in the basis of organizational structures of the previous period (professional unions and public organizations) (28,29). A vivid advantage is that the current 2,600 civil associations account for 10-15% socially active population, and 30-40% of “public activists” are people aged 25-40 (5). This positively influences the level of social mobilization, as there are no age disproportions, tough there’s a problem of inter-generation interaction. Socio-legal control is complicated in societies with a high share of socially dependent population (seniors, large families, and groups that are not adapted socially). Civil structures of the South Russia’s region formed against the background of support from the capital’s civil society, as the South Russia’s region is close to Moscow and St. Petersburg as to the factors of territorial and social distancing, is located at the joint of Russian borders, and has a developed cultural and information infrastructure.

As to the socio-professional criterion, it is obvious that recruiting into the civil structures of regional community was determined, firstly, by integration into civil activity of

representatives of not only highly-educated urban groups but also young activists, who wished to occupy an independent niche due to dissatisfaction with their position in “adult” political parties. Secondly, professional background of civil activists is connected economic or technical education, which raised the interest to the applied expertise of the activities of government structures. A vivid example is the fact that socio-legal control influenced the spheres of reconstruction of the housing and utilities infrastructure (24% queries), development of logistics infrastructure (16%), land problem (49%), and protection of water space (12%). In other words, the potential of development of civil society in the region according to the All-Russia classification puts regional community on the 18th – 21st positions (4). Priority of practical tasks in the sphere of socio-legal control and concentration of efforts on the regional problems formed. In view of a wide public resonance, caused by the fate of small rivers, the Sea of Azov, land use, and preservation of architectural image of cities and communities, socio-legal control is connected to evaluation of activities and influence on decision making at the regional and municipal levels.

On the one hand, this allowed accelerating the process of social mobilization – however, the complexity (which still remains) consists in the fact that civil structures have not achieved the balance of goals and interests with government institutes, feel the influence of lobbyism of regional business structures, and, as a rule, have a waiting attitude in conflict situations, following the principle of “opportunism”.

Paying attention to unsatisfactory activities of government institutes as to specific regional problems, civil associations make insufficient efforts for claiming independence, offering alternative solutions, and passing from dissatisfaction with administrative pressure to law enforcement practices. Civil structures use court procedures only in 6-7% of conflict situations. Hence, with careful attitude to the method of protest expressions of will and organization of events in the public space, the socio-legal problems do not form the collective intentionality. Within region’s civil structures we can see conflict of ambitions and interests, which cannot be compared to the real resource base. It is possible to suppose that the first generation of civil activities, which is based on the traditions of the “Soviet assets and interested regional business structures, is somewhat bewildered by the actual tasks of socio-legal control.

The habit of working according to the principle of “professional activism” and not treating new regional realities as the ones requiring coordination of the interests of various subjects of action create the effect of “yesterday”. When two post-Soviet generations with a different system of ideological coordinates and realization of significance of own choice and separation from “leadership” and “obligation” entered a new period, civil socio-legal control became significant in due to the place and role of structure of a new type. Acting according to the principle of situational mobilization in the context of network communication (the share of Internet users in the region reaches 75-80%), small civil groups do not strive for quantitative indicator (number of participants), for they value public resonance, influence on the position of government institutes on the basis of actionism, and cultural and symbolic events, which show the direction of social mobilization to the model of “voluntary and irregular participation”. In this sense, the number of civil

associations in a region becomes unstable, but, due to the voluntary character, the interest from youth increases (56%), as the region’s youth show positive interest to the activities of civil associations that are involved with socially important issues, and 29% of the respondents directly participated in volunteer actions (21).

Obviously, the perspectives of expansion of participation of civil associations in socio-legal control are determined by collective intentionality, based on understanding regional identity as civil self-implementation. It is possible to say that civil associations are interested at All-Russia indicators, and the regional component plays an inferior role in this. In other words, there’s a dependence of treating the perspectives of influence on the sphere of socio-legal control in regional community on the state of this direction of civil activity in other regions of Russia. On the one hand, this is a positive moment, as civil associations realize similarity of the problems that are connected to the influence on government institutes in other regions of Russia. However, a barrier of “apathy” appears – slow reaction to the current socio-legal problems.

Poor development of the legal direction in formation of civil associations as subjects of socio-legal control is expressed in the fact that, firstly, insufficient attention is paid to the expert evaluation of regional normative acts that regulate the ecological sphere, the sphere of socio-labor relations, youth policy, and legal regulation of property conflicts and civil conflicts. It is a paradox, but concentrating on practical actions, civil associations have incomplete legal potential and do not work with professional legal corps. Usage of tools of public opinion and conduct of protests and other irregular actions create an impression of “imitation” of actions.

Probably, civil associations in South Russia act by force of habit, following the lead of popular initiatives, which significantly narrows down the opportunities of usage of the legal and organizational resources for increasing the effectiveness of socio-legal control. In particular, the practice of public hearings and public expertise, as procedures of socio-legal control, is not developed sufficiently. Regional administrations have public chambers with representatives of civil associations, who have all-Russian background or tested schemes of interaction with government structures at the regional level.

Not denying the usefulness of activities of public chambers, one cannot say that they achieved the quality of “umbrella-type” structures that allow implementing the principle of quality of opportunities for all the existing civil associations. This is expressed in the fact that within the public chamber only 10-15% of civil associations show activity, while other civil associations work within joint projects with all-Russian civil associations or are localized in their activities and do not go beyond the important, but local, problems. Thus, civil associations in South Russia’s regional community have not achieved the level of consolidation that would allow them acting as a subject of socio-legal control. It is possible to say that there’s a shift towards socio-legal control with perspective of equal partnership with government institutes, but in this process government institutes perform the role of a case manager, not a moderator, of interaction with civil associations.

5 Conclusions

Analyzing the activities of civil associations in South Russia's regional community on the basis of usage of sociological information for Rostov Oblast (as we refer to it as to the indicators of concentration of government institutes, leadership in formation and development of civil associations and articulation in the public and legal space of the problems that are important for socio-legal control), it is possible to make the following conclusions.

Firstly, civil associations in the South Russia's regional community are in implicit competition with "non-civil" communities", which appeared in the period of anarchy of 1990's and use the tradition of unwritten law in relations with government institutes (ethnic, social and domestic, and confessional norms) – which is proved by civil associations' occupying peripheral positions regarding the problems that require socio-legal control (conflicts in the sphere of land use, residential construction, fighting juvenile crimes, and hatred on the ethno-national soil) (30).

Secondly, orienting at the status of subjects of socio-legal control in regional community, civil associations make emphasis on the practice of "opportunism" and usage of the corridor of opportunities in interaction with government institutes. As a result, government institutes at the level of regional management and regional policy are coordinators of socio-legal control and build relations with civil associations by the principle of loyal activity in the form of public hearings and participation in public councils as "observers". Thus, it is possible to state that civil associations acquired the status of agents of socio-legal control, acting according to the conditions and circumstances.

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