



The Role of Ideological Factor in Improving the Quality of Municipal Management System in the Modern Russian Society

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Abstract

The article studies the role of the ideological factor in improving the quality of municipal management in the Russian society. The authors dwell on the necessity for reconsidering the conceptually complex and contradictory situation that is connected to determination of relations of state management, municipal management, and local self-government. Though the legal acts establish the status of municipal management as a part of local self-government, it's not being a part of the system of public authorities and connection to direct participation of population, development of municipal management in Russia is influenced by the ideological factor at the level of the liberal, conservative, and populist ideologemes. The research results show that the liberal model of municipal management was corrected in favor of "smart conservatism", which reflects the social and managerial realities of the Russian society. The authors come to the conclusion that in the current situation the ideological factor plays a significant role in improving the quality of municipal management, has the role of a "filter" on the path of quick organizational innovations in the system of municipal management, which is connected to increase of the risks of populism as anti-system ideology and limited usage of the liberal model of municipal management as municipal corporation.

Keywords: Municipal Management, Local Self-Government, Quality, Liberal Model of Management, Conservative Model of Management, Ideological Factor, Populism

1 Introduction

The discussion regarding the contents, character, and goals of municipal management has not just the socio-economic component but, as experience of discussions in the public and legal sphere shows, Russian society discusses the ideological factor. The positions of the interested parties, political parties, public organizations, and bodies of state and municipal management inevitably include the issue of the ratio of state and municipal management and differences in coordination of formulas of municipal and local self-government.

At present, due to growth of populism and ideology in the general form, which is a "simplified solution of complex

problems", municipal management becomes the object of "consideration" and practical action as to the level of critical analysis and offer of alternatives to "influence of the state" and spontaneous self-organization". It is possible to state that municipal self-government causes public interest and requires systemic expert evaluation, as, on the one hand, it acquires popularity and the models of centralization draw attention, and on the other hand, there's a vivid striving for excluding municipal management from the interaction with the system of state and regional management, creating the conditions for "unlimited" participation of population in local self-government.

The existing law (Federal law "On the general principles of organization of local self-government in the Russian Federation" dated October 10, 2003, No. 131-FZ) established the general principles of functioning of municipal management as a component of local self-government, aimed at implementation of professional activities on satisfaction of

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needs and provision of services to municipal community. In this context, municipal management has large differences from local self-government in the elective structure according to the principle of representative democracy and, at the same time, has autonomy as to local self-government within the implanted functions. The observed collision between the treatments of the notions of municipal management and local self-government causes implications related to determining the spheres of competence of municipal self-government and local self-government, although dependence of municipal self-government on local self-government as the initial “matrix” of formation and control is beyond doubt.

Ideological factor, as a certain ratio of ideological feature and influence, is manifested in perceiving and constructing of the effective schemes of municipal management and at the level of understanding of the ratios between municipal management and local self-government and in the fact that attitudes towards municipal management and its social effectiveness and authority “pass” through the ideological factor and through the “ideal models” of municipal self-government, which are based on ideological constructs. Realization of the organizational & normative and structural parameters of municipal management is very actual for the Russian society; also, studying the ideological factor is very important in the context of determining the scenarios of municipal management and the role in the system of interaction of the state, society, and personality (13).

2 Materials and Methods

The authors use the method of “ideal types” of M. Weber (2014); ideological factor is treated as a model that embodies invariance of procedures, phenomena, and factors that are involved in formation and functioning of municipal management and have the systemic and structural consequences, which include organization, structure, goals, and functions of municipal management. The authors use the “ideal” models of municipal management, which are generated from the ideological schemes that dominate in the Russian public life. A special methodological role for this research belongs to neo-institutionalism, based on the works of foreign (6, 8), and Russian (1, 5, 7) researchers. The article is based on the results of studies of the cultural and ideological foundations of modernization of the national Russian system of state management (9, 14) and the results of analysis of local self-government in the system of regulation of inter-ethnic relations in the context of implementation of foreign experience in Russia (15).

3 Results

Formation of the system of municipal management in Russia is marked with ideological conflicts of the previous decade, opposition from the “state”, conservative tradition, and the attempt to plant in the Russian soil the ideas of self-government in the liberal variant, with the influence of regionalism and ethnic nationalism. The paradox of the situation with municipal management leads to the conclusion that the “Soviet” model of management cannot be replicated, and there’s a desire to see in municipal management the “driving mechanism” of the state and, especially, regional

management. This could be explained by the risks of regionalism and separatism, which had real influence on the state of managerial processes in the country, but one must also note the fact that municipal management as a sphere of socio-expert thought, was at a certain moment “compressed” within purely legal procedures. By default, municipal management was excluded from the sphere of “politization” and conflict of interests, but the emerging models of municipal management and simultaneous real formation of the channels of budget, tax, and economic dependence of municipal management in “power vertical” led to inclusion of the mechanisms of politization of municipal self-government, even if the issue was political configurations, interests of local elites, and attitudes and evaluations of population’s participation in the system of local management.

One might suppose that the ideological factor in development of municipal self-government developed from the liberal matrix of “freedom and self-regulation”. The difficulty of putting it on the schemes of municipal self-government consisted and still consists in the fact that municipal management belongs to democratic institutes, but the current Russian institutional system does not contain a window of possibilities for building the “soft” institutional environment and achievement of compromise between the increase of legality and formal norms, on the one hand, and social realia, on the other hand (2).

In other words, the liberal model of municipal management, which is treated as a totality of organizational & normative and structural norms, which allow establishing contractual relations between municipal management and local community, should work according to the method of “municipal corporation”, with the criteria of effectiveness, openness, and coordination of interests, which allow supporting the regime of provision of services to the local community and ensuring access to the resource of municipal management for interested groups (10). The difficulties connected to implementation of the liberal model of municipal management lead to the situation when the existing system of municipal management in the Russian society acts within limited responsibility, with absence or deficit of municipal property, weak tax bases, and dependence on the subvention policy of regional structured. It is possible to use the argument that the liberal model is not universal for the European experience and, according to the influence of the “populist wave”, there is dissatisfaction with formalism, bureaucratization of municipal management, and indifference to the interests of new groups and new social problems (gender, immigration, and ecological).

The liberal arguments are based on the idea that municipal management performed representative functions and is the sphere of activities of competence-based institutes of people (16). This envisages objective limitation for the people who do not have professional, business, and corporate qualities to be a part of municipal management. However, this approach creates a tendency of separation of municipal management from local self-government, when the formula of “cancelling direct elections” of a mayor is implemented, and a city manager is invited on the contractual basis. There is a certain disappointment in the fact that the corps of

municipal management might suffer from populism or excessive political ambitions.

In this sense, the program of “concessions” in implementation of the liberal model comes into effect, as the formula of limited public agreement, which has its origins in the Locke’s idea of the civil political society, does not work. Specifying this position, it is possible to state that the “ideal” civil society has not formed at the level of municipal entities; also, it is important to pay attention to the fact that the system of municipal management has the effect of “release of administrative spring”, increase of adaptive potential of municipal management based on the logic of self-production, and achievement of rationality of goals on the basis of improvement of goals on the basis of improvement of administrative and intra-organizational methods. The existing schemes of municipal management require no so much the universal classifier as a complex but necessary work of implementation of the system of municipal management, which observes the political and legal principles that are set by the law but determine specific methods of formation and evaluation of local self-government according to the volume of real tasks, experience of participation of population in self-management, authority and influence of public organizations, and creation of coalitions for promoting the common goals and projects of a municipal entity.

In other words, it means expansion of the “window of opportunities” for real influence of municipal management on the state of affairs at the municipal, regional, and national levels. The existing “center” model of municipal management envisages “retreat” from extremes of liberalism and populism, showing the priority of stability before organizational and structural innovations. Accusations of the conservative and protectionism shift and transaction costs of bureaucracy have a power of argumentation if they consider the fact that “direct democracy” is impossible in the modern society and in the conditions of complex socio-economic and legal space of Russia there’s a necessity for dosing of “smart” conservatism” for avoiding the risks of fragmentation of municipal management under the influence of destructive factors of populism and real participation in programs and projects that go beyond the organizational, mobilization, and financial opportunities of municipal management (11).

Probably, conservatism, as an ideological factor, is manifested in organization and structure of municipal management in three dimensions. Firstly, at present municipal management requires “hibernation”, so, in the conditions of growth of crisis phenomena, it could observe the principle of coordination of actions and interests with the system of state and regional management. In other words, it is possible to speak of emergence of the points of turbulence, loss of manageability, and focus on “negative results”. Secondly, if conservatism is treated not as following the tradition of “communalism” but as a policy of value and normative consensus, built on legal order, stability, and security, it is possible to speak of a compromise satisfactory solution, and that conservatism is not just a reaction to “revolutionary changes” but restoration of common sense and acknowledgment of the role of the state in regulation of complex public processes. In view of the fact that local self-government, with which the authority and functionality of

municipal management is associated, is in the lower area of institutional trust of Russians (27% of Russians trust, 48% of Russians do not trust) (3), and there’s a necessity to “strengthen” the symbolic resources of municipal management by the institutes of order and stability (primarily, regional authorities).

Probably, in the current situation the role of municipal management as an institute that satisfied the demands of municipal community for social justice, balance of interests, and development of infrastructure, is very important. Self-organization and self-regulation of population, which seem necessary on the logic of the proper, are the conditions related to finding new social practices and to the level of public organizations and communities’ stimulating the development of municipal management. As of now, the answer is not satisfactory (only 4% of Russians have a desire to participate in public organizations which sphere of interests is local self-government) (3).

It is possible to conclude that the conservative model of municipal management in the existing Russian society is a forced acknowledgment of social realia, weak resource base of municipal management, and poor indicators of social self-organization of population. Also, as analysis of the situation in the regions with the highest level of critical attitude towards activities of municipal management shows, expectations from municipal management are connected to social and investment activities, acquisition of competence in overcoming of local crisis phenomena, and access to social resources.

4 Discussion

In view of the above, it is necessary to pay attention to the influence of the populist ideology, which contains the anti-system meritocratic character with the requirement for radical update of the system of municipal management, redistribution of the spheres of competence of state management and local self-government, and transition to the models of “democracy of participation” of population, making the system of municipal management elected on the constant basis.

The ideology of populism is not independent in formation of the model of municipal management, having emerged as “aggressive anti-liberalism”, but with signs of “external ochlocracy” and foundation on domination of “private” local interests. A community concept (early 2000’s) with the ideas of synthesis of traditions and modern time and new social order, which respects the person’s autonomy, decreases attractiveness – if one stands on the position that municipal management is the system of collective activities and social needs (4). However, according to the American experience of local management, the problem is that communitarism set the way for populism. With worries regarding social anarchy (criminalization, racial discrimination, and clan system) communitarism, while requiring the reduction of the gap between individual freedom and social responsibilities, does not take into account the fact that voluntariness in the modern society under the influence of political and information technologies might acquire the populist character. Interest to direct democracy and creation of a just social order could be based on “manipulated competence” and attractiveness of

ideological simulacra and PR images. It is supposed that municipal management will definitely gain from recruiting “socially responsible parties”. However, complexity of the situation is that the procedure of “nomination” of teaching the skills of self-management and voluntary subordination of citizens in the sphere of execution of social duties (schools, sphere of social provision, support for social services) are not determined (12,18).

An obvious result of determining the role of the ideological factor in development of the system of municipal management in the Russian society is impossibility to overcome the ideological interpretations that negatively influence the assessment of perspectives of municipal management as a necessary “mediation” level in management of the Russian society. Probably, the problem consists not so much in specification of ratio between state, regional, and municipal management – though practical interest of jurists to it is very high. A more significant issue is contours of open discussion in the public sphere of real and effective mechanisms of municipal management, local self-government, direct democracy, and population’s participation. The determined ideological factor in the system of municipal management allows stating that the level of ideological contradictions in the Russian society dropped down, and the formula of “healthy conservatism” is efficient within municipal management, which leads to discussions regarding democratization or increase of state intervention in the system of municipal management. One result of the discussion is clear – in discussion of the perspectives of municipal management it is necessary to find a compromise, containing the assessment of opportunities of the ideology to contribute into creation of comfortable world at the level of municipal entities and to ensure implementation of multiple projects on the territory of Russia.

5 Conclusions

Thus, the comprehension of the ideological factor in the development of municipal management in Russian society leads to the conclusion of its important role in improving the quality of municipal governance in Russia. Firstly, to the thought that to deny the influence of the ideological and political aspects on construction of municipal management due to absolute neutrality is inefficient and inexpedient. The trust of Russians to local self-government, which will lead only to statement of low effectiveness of municipal management and preservation of “paternalist syndrome”. Secondly, could be explained in the ideological factor. The system of municipal management, oriented at stability, security, and order, loses to public institutes in this rating. Thirdly, it is possible to suppose that there are differences between the declared liberal formula of municipal management as a municipal corporation or system of contractual relations and real practices of municipal management, largely oriented at solving the current

problems, which requires concentration of power resources and limitation of “risk” self-activity.

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