

**Social partnership
in regional policy of
modern society**

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP IN REGIONAL POLICY OF MODERN SOCIETY

ASOCIACIÓN SOCIAL EN LA POLÍTICA REGIONAL DE LA SOCIEDAD MODERNA.

ABSTRACT

The object of this research is an interaction between the public and the government within the Russian regional policy, which is the essence and content of the social association as an integrated phenomenon (normative value, institutional and communicative) that forms a model of joint development in the interaction between public and government of regional societies. The authors analyze the historical tradition, the continuity and the novelty in the understanding of the interaction of the association, as well as characterize in a substantive way the current state of the social association in the Russian Federation, and also indicate the perspectives of its development in base to sociological research materials and expert surveys. The theoretical and methodological basis of the work was carried out from national and foreign studies of political scientists, sociologists and lawyers. The empirical basis of the research was sociological studies and expert surveys conducted in the regions of the Russian Federation. The authors argue that social association should be analyzed in three interrelated aspects: value (axiological), institutional (level of organization of social institutions and their interaction) and technology (level of socio-political forms of activity and specific practices). The work shows a positive trend in the socio-political regional consciousness, which is associated with an awareness of the importance and responsibility of all subjects of the interaction between the public and the government to solve various problems of the development of a socioeconomic context and regional, and the political space.

KEYWORDS: power, state, law, politics, expert survey, social society, political process, society, regional space, social dynamics



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RESUMEN

El objeto de esta investigación es una interacción entre el público y el gobierno dentro de la política regional rusa, que es la esencia y el contenido de la asociación social como un fenómeno integrado (normativo de valor, institucional y comunicativo) que forma un modelo de desarrollo conjunto en la interacción entre público y gobierno de las sociedades regionales. Los autores analizan la tradición histórica, la continuidad y la novedad en la comprensión de la interacción de la asociación, así como caracterizan de manera sustantiva el estado actual de la asociación social en la Federación Rusa, y también indican las perspectivas de su desarrollo en base a materiales de investigación sociológica y encuestas de expertos. La base teórica y metodológica del trabajo fue realizada a partir de estudios nacionales y extranjeros de científicos políticos, sociólogos y abogados. La base empírica de la investigación fueron los estudios sociológicos y las encuestas de expertos realizadas en las regiones de la Federación de Rusia. Los autores argumentan que la asociación social debe analizarse en tres aspectos interrelacionados: valor (axiológico), institucional (nivel de organización de las instituciones sociales y su interacción) y tecnológico (nivel de formas socio-políticas de actividad y prácticas específicas). El trabajo muestra una tendencia positiva en la conciencia socio-política regional, lo que se asocia con una conciencia de la importancia y la responsabilidad de todos los sujetos de la interacción entre el público y el gobierno para resolver diversos problemas del desarrollo de un contexto socioeconómico y regional, y el espacio político.

PALABRAS CLAVE: poder, estado, derecho, política, encuesta de expertos, sociedad social, proceso político, sociedad, espacio regional, dinámica social

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INTRODUCTION

The dominant problem in Western European research projects that set the “tone” of Russian political science is the search for the foundations of a political system and civic outlook that would ensure the development of “global citizenship” [1] associated not with cultural traditions, certain national and ethnic groups, but with the global “constitutional legal identity” [2]. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century Western European political science and public and government practice justify and carry out a quick dismantling of national identity and socio-cultural (political, ethnic, spiritual, intellectual, etc.) specifics.

Summarizing the latest achievements in this field of research, we can distinguish two main areas that develop either innovative (neoliberal) forms of political communication, where sociocultural models and practices that ensure national and cultural unity and the ethnopolitical stability of the interaction between public and government are given very little; or revolutionary (neo-Marxism, neo-anarchism, cosmopolitanism) forms of social unity which deprive both the state and national models of the interaction between public and government of any social significance in the future [3].

However, these two directions are contradictory; each of them represents a problem “reflexive field”, “producing” quite controversial practical projects of a public-imperious organization. In this connection, a problematic question arises: is a national and ethnopolitical stability possible outside state-legal and sociocultural forms of organization, and are global civil institutions (dynamic and constantly restructuring) capable of ensuring a stable and predictable evolution of social systems and political relations?

In our opinion, the most appropriate form and practice of sociocultural development ensuring stability of the interaction between public and government, i.e. between key actors of the socio-economic and political-legal life of Russian society, is social partnership. Fairly in this regard, E.M. Osipov noted that today “social partnership is a condition and goal of social development. The condition, as it allows for implementing the most rational and effective models of social interaction in society, to overcome conflicts and alienation,

thereby contributing to the stability of social relations. The goal, since its institutionalization is a criterion of social solidarity and integration in society, its ability to self-organization and self-development [4, 89].

Moreover, as it will be shown below, social partnership, on the one hand, is a political institution that is adequate to the sociocultural specificity of Russian society and fits into the conciliar and solidarist tradition; and, on the other hand, it creates conditions that stimulate the development of society as a socio-cultural whole, since it ensures the effective combination of stable national forms of interaction between public and government with innovative and modernizing the factors of modern transformation of social systems [18].

In this aspect, the content of this paper is proposed to consider as the essence of social partnership within the context of interaction between public and government between society, business and the state, as well as to analyze the level of its development in the Russian Federation (particularly in various regions of the Russian Federation) and the main directions of its development.

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BASES OF RESEARCH

In modern research projects, of particular importance are various forms and technologies of social interaction [3], solidarity [5], trust [6] and mutual assistance [7], mutually coordinated activities and cohesion [8]. At the same time, classical liberal-democratic ideas about the fundamental “equidistance” of the two centers of the public and government space - civil society and the state, will be replaced by socially-oriented doctrines. The content of

the latter substantiates the new principles of organizing a "moral community", with developed forms of solidarism, trust and mutual assistance, as well as "ways of relating to others, which are defined as "we"" [9, 44]. This general focus on the formation of "soft" social and moral ties and interpersonal reports is a global socio-political trend in the 21st century.

In general, the society foundation or core of, as well as the "final "atom" of social life, as Peter Sztompka rightly points out, are the actions of some people in relation to others. Interhuman space consists of contacts, meetings, interactions and crystallizes in the form of more long-term social relations between sets of organizations, regimes, systems, up to the ontological border outlining the entire population" [9, 30]. The latest statement is fundamental in understanding and social partnership as a sustainable institution that organizes and directs the interaction of people, organizations and other social institutions to achieve universally significant goals and guidelines in the context of preserving the integrity and unity of the regional community, and Russian society as a whole [19; 20].

The present work also relies on various sociological studies that have been conducted in Russian society in recent years [10–14], as well as on expert surveys conducted in 13 regions of the Russian Federation on quota principle [15]. Expert estimates were given by different categories of experts. The survey involved: scientists, government officials, representatives of municipal authorities, the business community and various public organizations [15].

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION

Social partnership is one of the key institutions in modern socio-economic and political processes unfolding in a particular region of the country, in society as a whole. It is far from being exhausted by labor relations, business processes and social agreements, trade-offs, and so on.

In this aspect, we note that the social partnership is a wider phenomenon, it has a complex nature, since it is a system of public and

government, socially significant and civilizational relations between the individual – the society – and the state. This system organizes and expresses the dominant social interests (both public and hidden), values and needs. In addition, it involves developed forms of social and political interaction and sustainable practices of public partnership and public interaction between public structures, the business community, government agencies, as well as technology to mobilize material and symbolic resources for effective protection and implementation of the latter.

The institutional and functional characteristics of social partnership are conditioned by the needs for social solidarity and integration of society, harmonization and protection of socially significant interests, development of political forms of dialogue and cooperation between various actors (institutions of public authority, civil society, and individuals), non-commercial forms of partnership, mutual assistance and support, protection of rights and freedoms, mediation / conflict-free resolution of disputes and contradictions.

Consequently, social partnership is a rather significant institution playing a significant role in the modern political process, the specificity of which is related to the ability of political entities to organize and co-develop (joint development in the context of ensuring social integrity, social welfare, national and regional security). Being a political institution, social partnership dialectically combines forms and technologies of stabilization and harmonization of social relations (public-government, corporate, commercial, non-commercial, cultural, scientific, etc.) with the activation of self-organizing incentives and conditions for joint development. In addition, the latter provides conditions for conflict-free interaction and mutual enrichment of traditions and innovations, modernization and conservative (culture-civilization) trends in the development of the political process.

Value-normative guides and goals for the development of the interaction between public and government in the modern Russian Federation

Modern sociological studies indicate that not a person-centered model of the interaction between public and government, but a

socially oriented one dominates in Russian society [3]. Moreover, the setting to formation of “soft” public and interpersonal relations, as well as the moral and legal system of responsibility of key public policy actors (state and municipal employees, representatives of the business elite, etc.) is steadily reproduced in the domestic political space.

For example, recent socio-psychological studies have revealed a high degree of anxiety among people about the “fall” of the spiritual and moral responsibility of public policy representatives. These anxieties “are connected not so much with economic problems, although they lie on the surface, but with a sense of alienation of public authorities from society, its injustice and self-interest, the lack of moral support. This “humanitarian dimension” associated with the values, moods and moral climate is very poorly developed” both among modern conservatives and modernizers [10, 22-23].

Another characteristic feature of mass consciousness is associated with a certain “antinomicity” of social expectations and demands. Thus, the public consciousness formed the requirement to integrate Western European achievements in the field of human rights and freedoms, a number of democratic values and principles of market relations with the socio-cultural model of political organization and traditional (historically established) practices of solidaristic interaction between public and government in the system of “person - society – state” [11].

A whole series of sociological studies fixes that “organic fusion” of the national traditional world outlook and modernization values, modern democratic requirements for public authority, and the results of its activities is characteristic of the domestic political consciousness [12; 13].

The latter fully applies to the interaction between public and government, between the institutions of civil society, the business community and government bodies. So, on the one hand, the democratic principles and the model of the rule of law are the leading principles of organization of the interaction between public and government. For example, the idea of strengthening of the Russian Federation as a legal state occupies for many years (according to sociological studies of 1995–2011) one of

the key positions in the mass consciousness, and democratic values (interaction based on respect and protection of rights and freedoms, pluralism and different positions) also became an important part of the modern political culture of Russians [11, 246].

On the other hand, the dominant views of traditional solidaristic orientation are reproduced in the modern Russian society in the interaction between public and government. It can be stated that the personalistic West-European model does not find a “response” in the mass consciousness of citizens. For example, the idea of individual freedom, the priority of the interests of an individual over the interests of the state over many years (1995 - 2011) demonstrates a stable dynamics and takes from 6 to 10% of Russians [11, 246].

It can be noted that throughout the centuries-long history of political and legal doctrines, various theoretical and conceptual versions and political programs provided footholds for the principle of service to society as the leading basis and target in the system “personality - society – state”. Within the framework of the latter, the primary is not the division of spheres and powers of public law authorities or the dominance of interests and needs of any subjects, not opposing of various political subjects and legal statuses of the business community - public structures - state institutions, but symphonic unity of the political space and a right-binding model of relations” focused on solving national goals and objectives [16].

The socially oriented model of public interaction is also dominant in the assessments of experts from various regions of the country. Thus, the expert community identifies social partnership as the dominant principle on the basis of which the relationship between society, business and the state should form and develop (see Table 1). It should be noted that the partnership relations between the key actors of socio-economic and political interaction are based on the socially-oriented model of public space organization which is traditional for Russian society.

At the same time, for example, in Primorsky Territory, the development of which largely depends on strong financial, political and other support of the state and the business community (which, for example, have hopes

for the socio-economic development of the region [17]) expert estimation differ from those in most regions of the country (Table 1). Thus, the state and the business community are considered as significant actors in the socio-economic development of regional space. Nevertheless, the general social orientation of the interaction between public and government remains the key and dominant priority in the functioning of the state, business structures and other institutions of civil society (Table 2).

Table 1 (See Annexes). "What principles, in your opinion, should be basic for relations between representatives of civil society, government and business?" (%)

Moreover, as the evolution of the national state-legal organization shows, the deformation or destruction of the social orientation of the interaction between public and government and the moral (social-moral in more broad sense) responsibility of the main actors of public power relations in practice activates destructive, conflict-prone and risky factors in development of the state, its political and economic systems, and the public organization of society as a whole.

Indicative in this respect are the assessments of the expert community, which distinguishes precisely socially oriented response options as the dominant target for the development of public interaction between society, business and the state (Table 2). At the same time, statist ("strengthening the influence of public authorities in society") and liberal-democratic ("transferring of a part of the state's functions to civil society", "creating favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship") orientations are not leading in expert assessments.

Table 2 (See Annexes). "How do you imagine the main goals of interaction between civil society, the state and business?" (%)

In general, as can be seen from the above, the principle of social partnership is leading in the development of the interaction between public and government within the system of civil society - business structures - the state. At the same time, this interaction is focused on the formation of a socio-economic model for the co-development of all key actors in the regional socio-economic and po-

litical space. The expert community assesses the latter as an effective way of harmonizing the various interests of the regional community, and also considers social partnership as an effective form of integrating multi-vector needs, organizing and directing social activity towards solving common acute problems and conflicts.

In this aspect, it can be stated that for the most part of regional communities, the orientation towards the joint resolution of contradictions and conflicts arising in the development of a particular community prevails. Paternalistic expectations, as well as "imposing" social hopes on states on resolving the problems of the regional community are not leading in expert assessments. As a rule, the state is recognized as playing the leading role as a guarantor of counteraction against general socio-economic risks and prevention (primarily at the institutional and regulatory level) of destructive factors in public-government relations [15].

Performance criteria for social partnership within Performance criteria for social partnership within the system of civil society - business structure - the state. The above thesis on social orientation of the interaction between public and government (as opposed to the liberal-democratic, personalistic model) is also confirmed against the background of the effectiveness criteria of this interaction highlighted by the expert community (Table 3)(See Annexes).

In the expert estimates below, it can be seen that social orientation essentially dominates with regard to the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of interaction between civil society, business and the state. So, the first place is occupied by the standards of living and welfare of the population as the leading criterion; the second - economic indicators, the third - the quality of interethnic relations, the fourth - level of bureaucracy in public management, the fifth - level of corruption in social relations. Other indicators scored no more than 5%.

It is noteworthy that the modern "media agenda" consisting of problems of corruption, bureaucracy and ethnic conflicts is not leading in expert assessments, does not fully coincide with social expectations and a general orientation towards achieving a decent

standard of living and welfare of the regional community. At the same time, if to combine such criteria of efficiency as the standards of living and economic indicators, then it can be stated that improvement of life in the Russian regions and joint cooperation of main economic and political actors in their achieving are the key demand since the latter are largely related to and reflect the general socio-economic condition and well-being of the regional communities.

Table 3 (See Annexes). "In your opinion, what criteria are most important when assessing the interaction between civil society, government and business?" (%)

In this logic, it can be noted that social partnership and the model of relations between public and government in their co-development form such conditions under which all key actors of regional interaction, on the one hand, determine and (or) correct the choice of goals, consistent and (or) not contradicting the integrity and socio-cultural specifics of a regional space, as well as the general target orientations of the development of the latter; and on the other hand, the coordination and harmonization of the forms and activities of a particular actor (civil society institutions, business structures, government bodies), with the interests and forms approved by other participants in the partnership, as well as the general needs and expectations of the regional community [22].

In this aspect, social partnership can be analyzed not only as a significant political institution, but also as a specific socio-political technology. In other words, social partnership is in a broad sense communicative-activity forms of manifestation of actors at the level of joint organizational, managerial and socio-design activities aimed at social construction and reproduction of regional space as a specific socio-economic, cultural and political integrity [18, 101].

In the narrow sense, social partnership is a system of forms, techniques, methods, activities and influences implemented by key actors of a regional space to achieve common goals and guidelines formed in the process of self-development of a particular community, socio-political design and economic planning situations, public awareness, interaction practices, etc.

There are several basic technologies of social partnership:

- first, it provides for "transfer" of the interaction between public and government from the format of confrontation to the mode of political interaction and partnership decisions, and resolution of conflicts and contradictions that arise;

- secondly, it focuses the interaction between public and government on the harmonization of multi-vector interests and needs, achieving a balance in the overall target orientations of the development of regional space, preventing the dominance of any specific interests of business, state or public organization and structures;

- thirdly, it forms the conditions and conscious orientations of key actors of the interaction between public and government towards joint development and achievement of generally significant goals and results;

- fourth, social partnership is the value-normative basis for the development of forms and methods of effective socio-political interaction in various spheres of the regional community, which all participants in public and government relations are guided by [4, 92].

CONCLUSIONS

1. Social partnership can be analyzed in three interrelated aspects: value (axiological), institutional (level of organization of social institutions and their interaction) and technological (level of socio-political forms of activity and specific practices).


Concerning the first aspect, social partnership is considered as a value-normative basis for the formation and development of partnership interaction between key actors of public-government relations aimed at achieving common interests, serving as standards for effective resolution of acute contradictions, conflicts, overcoming certain states and situations.

In the second aspect, social partnership is one of the key institutions in modern socio-economic and political processes developing in a given region of the country, and in society as a whole. The development of the latter is due to the needs for social solidarity and

integration of society, harmonization and protection of socially significant interests, development of political forms of dialogue and cooperation between different actors, non-commercial forms of partnership, mutual assistance and support, protection of rights and freedoms, mediative / conflict-free resolution of disputes and contradictions.

In the third aspect, social partnership is represented as communicative activity forms and practices of actors at the level of joint organizational, managerial, and socio-design activities aimed at social construction and reproduction of the regional space as a specific socio-economic, cultural and political integrity.

2. The modern regional expert community states that the model of social partnership in the Russian Federation is rather weakly developed, and the interaction between society, government and business is sporadic; the systemic interaction between these key actors is only the prospect of improving regional socio-economic and political space. At the same time, most experts recognize the need to develop social partnership to solve many regional problems, contradictions and conflicts. Positive trends are also noted, namely the formation of stable prerequisites for the development of social partnership in the regional space. At the same time, many forms and mechanisms of social partnership are just beginning to be tested and applied. There is a search for the most optimal and effective forms and directions of interaction between society and business structures, joint social development programs supported by the state, the business community, and so on.

3. In addition, it should be noted also a positive trend in the regional socio-political consciousness, which is associated with an awareness of the importance and responsibility of all subjects of the interaction between public and government in solving various problems in the modern development of a particular community. Obviously, at the level, of at least an expert community, the responsibility for solving these problems and contradictions lies with not only the public authorities, but with all the participants in the interaction between public and government. 

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ANNEXES

The subject of the RF Versions	Rostov region	Arkhangelsk region	Saratov region	Ulyanovsk region	Krasnodar region	Belgorod region	Primorsky Territory
Principles of social partnership	58.14	60,87	69.20	73.08	62.00	31.30	8.00
The leading role in these relations should belong to the state.	26.25	20.87	25.00	11.54	14.00	38.26	42.00
If financial resources are available to business, this allows its representatives to establish their own rules in these relationships.	4.49	12,17	4.20	7,69	15.00	19.13	35.00
The vector of interaction should be established by representatives of civil society.	7.97	0.00	0.80	7,69	9.00	10.43	6.00
Other	0.33	3.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
No answer	1.16	2.61	0.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.00

Table 1. "What principles, in your opinion, should be basic for relations between representatives of civil society, government and business?" (%)

The subject of the RF Options	Rostov region	Arkhangelsk region	Saratov region	Ulyanovsk region	Krasnodar region	Belgorod region	Primorsky Territory
Effective solution to the problems of citizens, improving the lives of the population	62.62	61.74	58.40	39.29	53.00	54.78	38.00
Improving the quality of public services for the population and the mechanism for their provision	23.75	15.65	10.00	21.43	19.00	0.00	26.00
Strengthening the influence of public authorities in society	4.15	6.09	1.60	7.14	14.00	20.00	19.00
Transfer of a part of state functions to civil society	6.31	9.57	19.20	21.43	10.00	7.80	11.00
Creating favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship	16.61	5.22	10.00	10.71	4.00	13.91	4.00
Other	0.83	0.87	0.00	39.29	0.00	0.00	2.00
No answer	0.50	0.87	0.80	21.43	0.00	1.73	0.00

Table 2. "How do you imagine the main goals of interaction between civil society, the state and business?" (%)

The RF subject Options	Rostov region	Arkhangelsk region	Primorsky Territory	Saratov region	Republic of Karelia	Ulyanovsk region	Krasnodar region	Belgorod region
Standards of living and welfare	79.40	66.96	48	60.80	49.57	69.23	43.00	76.51
The level of corruption in public relations	12.79	8.79	0.00	9.30	7.83	7.96	31.00	2.67
The level of bureaucracy in public management	7.97	5.22	12.00	2.50	15.65	0.00	15.00	2.63
Economic indicators	19.6	17.39	20.00	25.00	18.26	23.08	9.00	13.01
The quality of inter-ethnic relations	4.49	1.74	16.00	1.60	0.87	0.00	2.0	4.30
Other	0.33	0.00	4.00	0.00	5.22	0.00	0.00	0.00
No answer	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.80	2.61	0.00	0.00	0.80

Table 3. "In your opinion, what criteria are most important when assessing the interaction between civil society, government and business?" (%)