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**The Effects of Institutional Civic Participation on Policy Implementation in  
the Russian Regions: Evidence from Administrative and Waste Management  
Reforms**

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

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## **Statement of the research problem. Characteristics of the degree of development**

Within the political science, there are number of works that try to link the results of policy processes with the existing institutional structure of political regimes: from broad theories of modernization (for example, the theory of authoritarian modernization proposed by S. Huntington (1965), the inverse concept by S.M. Lipset (1960, p. 27-63) and its further developments) to specific, lower-level theories of policy changes (policy studies) (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Kingdon, 2014; Brewer and deLeon, 1983).

At the individual level, these changes are analyzed using different concepts of decision-making processes (Downs, 1957; Tsebelis, 1995, 2002, Nordhaus, 1972). However, most of these concepts were developed to analyze decision-making in the presence of democratic institutions and, if they do work in non-democracies, then with numerous reservations only. The rare attempts to model policymaking in autocracies are to some extent oversimplified, (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006) and even less suitable for describing the policy process in hybrid regimes, characterized by a variety of forms of institutional structures (Carothers, 2002; Schedler, 2002).

In works on mixed regimes, political institutions that resemble democratic ones (elections, party system, etc.) are viewed as an autocrat's tool to ensure his survival (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Levitsky and Way, 2002; Pepinsky, 2013; Schedler, 2002). Moreover, policies are often taken as mere by-products of the bargaining power of politics. (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006) An excessive, in my opinion, reduction to the interests of an autocrat (albeit with a mention of a number of external structural factors, an attempt to take into account the transformation of the regime that is parallel to the reformation processes) is also present in works devoted to the theoretical interpretation of the case of the Russian reforms of the 2000s (Gel'man and Starodubtsev, 2014; Dekalchuk, 2017). In fact, Russian reforms are either explicitly described as an example of "authoritarian modernization" (Gel'man, 2009), or it is implied implicitly.

This kind of reduction to the exclusively "authoritarian" side of the hybrid regime seems to me barely justified. On the one hand, in modern studies of non-democratic regimes, there is an understanding that the institutionalization of the political process contributes to both the realization of the interests of authoritarian elites and ordinary citizens, not being a zero-sum game (Little, 2017). On the other hand, at the turn of the century in Russia, there was a problem of the dilemma of simultaneity (Offe, 2003), which implied the existence of extreme uncertainty and incompleteness of information. In this situation, it is difficult to imagine an autocrat capable of implementing and long-term planning of policies, proceeding solely from his own rational interests. In addition, the available empirical developments testify in favor of the importance of the formal "democratic" features of the Russian regime as a factor in the outcome of reforms in a number of cases. In particular, A. Sungurov noted the important role of initially democratic mediator institutions and the participation of the expert community in the processes of political innovation (Sungurov, 2015). In the course of earlier studies, I found a significant relationship between the index of democracy in Russian regions and the dynamics of changes in the healthcare sector during the reform period. However, the effect of the degree of democracy of the regional regime was different in the case of different reforms.

At the turn of the XX-XXI centuries, one of the consequences of economic and administrative reforms associated with the spread of the idea of the state as a regulator (as opposed to the the main producer of public goods) was the emergence and expansion of the institution of civic participation in the policy process in authoritarian (China (Teets, 2013)) and transitional regimes (Russia (Tarasenko, 2011)). The role of civic participation in the institutional structure of non-democracies can be understood from the point of view of two approaches. According to the first of them, the engagement of citizens in the process of developing and implementing political courses is one of the substitutes for democratic institutions, the meaning of which has nothing to do with the democratic "original". This position refuses to recognize the opportunity of civic participation in undemocratic regimes having any real impact on the policy outputs and outcomes, emphasizing that the

main functions of this substitute are aimed at maintaining the stability of the undemocratic regime (Petrov, Lipman and Hale, 2014; Dmitrov, 2014; Gallagher, 2002). Proponents of a different approach agree that the participation of citizens in the policy process in non-democratic regimes contributes to the stability of authoritarian elites. But at the same time, they point to the need to conceptually separate the reasoning about the significance of this institution for the dynamics of the political regime and its meaning for the policy process. Thus, noting that the main functions of civic participation in a non-democratic regime are internal and external legitimization of the regime, the canalization of discontent, and the aggregation of information about the mood of the population, the researchers nevertheless recognize, on the one hand, the possibility of existence, albeit limited within a narrow framework, but real pluralism within the policy process in non-democratic regimes. On the other hand, they admit an opportunity of citizens to influence its outputs and outcomes (Owen and Bindman, 2019; Owen 2020). Within the latter framework, first of all, in attempts to comprehend the Chinese experience, a large number of original concepts have been recently developed that describe the meaning and functioning of the institution of civic participation in a non-democratic regime (Owen, 2020, p.3): "populist authoritarianism" (Wenfang, 2016); "consultative authoritarianism" (Teets, 2013); "authoritarian responsiveness" (Chen, Pan and Xu, 2016); "authoritarian deliberation" (Baogang, 2011); "participatory authoritarianism" (Owen, 2020). The logic of the participation of citizens and associations of the third sector in the Russian policy process is analyzed in the works of E. Bindman, E. Bogdanova, M. Kulmala, L. Nikovskaya, K. Owen, I. Skalaban, A. Tarasenko, V. Yakimts and others (Bindman, Kulmala and Bogdanova, 2019; Tarasenko and Kulmala, 2015; Nikovskaya and Skalaban, 2017; Nikovskaya and Yakimets, 2016; Owen and Bindman, 2019; Owen, 2020; Owen, 2017; Skalaban, 2011; Tarasenko, 2011, 2015).

**Research problem** at the center of this study follows from the above contradiction in approaches assessing the role of the institution of civic participation

in a non-democratic regime. On the one hand, the inability of civic participation to lead to some real influence by citizens on the policy process in non-democratic regimes is asserted. On the other hand, it is argued that under certain conditions such influence can be significant. In this sense, it is important to understand under what circumstances civic participation performs exclusively the functions of a substitute that ensures the stability of an undemocratic regime, and under what conditions it can be a significant factor of the policy process.

Russian structural reforms, which have been implemented at a different pace since the beginning of the 2000s and are included in several top-level strategic documents, are often characterized as technocratic and are cited as an example of an attempt at authoritarian modernization. This implies that the transformations were and are being carried out in a significant isolation from the influence of interest groups and society as a whole. At the same time, there are studies that convincingly demonstrate that, in the institutional structure of a hybrid regime, it is impossible to eliminate the dependence of decision makers on the influence of interest groups, since these groups are the backbone of the existing system of power. The most striking examples of this include the police reform and the administrative reform of the 2000s, the implementation of which, if not completely, was largely controlled by the departments being reformed themselves. However, it also turned out to be impossible to isolate the society in a broad sense from the course of socio-economic reforms that directly affected its interests. Most notable here is the reaction of society to the monetization of benefits and changes in the pension system, which caused wide waves of all-Russian protests.

Thus, we see that the complete elimination of societal forces from the political and administrative process is impossible even in the Russian realities of a hybrid political regime. However, it is also clear that in various spheres of political courses, under various external conditions, the influence of society manifests itself to varying degrees. In this sense, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to the manifestation of this influence and ensure its significance in the course of decision-making processes and their implementation.

In turn, the research problem of this work is focused on institutionalized civic participation as a factor of the policy process in the Russian regions. At the same time, by civic participation, we mean the impact of citizens on government bodies (interaction with government bodies) in order to realize public interests in the course of policies development and implementation. In turn, the institutionalization of participation implies the existence of certain rules and norms (formal and informal), stable procedures. Examples of channels of institutionalized civic participation in the Russian context include the activities of various public advisory structures (public chambers, advisory and expert councils under government bodies) and non-profit (primarily socially oriented) organizations, participation in public hearings. It is important to take into account the differences in opportunities and limitations that are features of different channels of institutionalized participation. The socially oriented non-profit organizations can have a significant impact on the implementation of policies in certain areas, suggesting the need (or possibility) for such organizations to act as the ultimate producers of services (primarily within the framework of various areas of social policy). At the same time, such NGOs can be to some extent dependent on the authorities if most of their financial resources are grants and other incomes stemming from the state. Public advisory structures are even more dependent on the authorities, since the latter control their composition and, to a large extent, the agenda. In addition, state bodies are not obliged to respond to the position of these structures and somehow take it into account in the course of the policy process. However, the agenda of advisory councils and civic chambers is much broader than that of socially oriented organizations; and sometimes their participation in the discussion of decisions (on non-politicized issues) leads to their changes. Public hearings provide an opportunity for the participation of a formally unlimited circle of people, "ordinary" citizens. But the authorities are also not obliged to take into account the resolutions adopted as a result of the hearings. In addition, information about their implementation is often not provided in a convenient way.

It is important, however, to note that in the framework of this study, we are primarily interested in some aggregated level of institutionalized participation in general: a structural feature of the political system that reflects the activity of societal actors, their integration into the life of the community, and not features of the influence of specific channels of participation.

### **Characteristics of the research design**

Trying to assess the role of the institution of civic participation in the development and implementation of policies in a non-democratic regime, I propose a research question of how did the differences in the level of institutional civic participation in the policy process influence the outputs of the policy process in the Russian regions in the second half of the 2010s?

**The goal of the study** is to identify conditions that contribute to the significance of the institutional civic participation as a factor of the policy process in Russian regions and determine the effects of such influence.

To achieve this goal, following objectives were set:

- 1) To construct a conceptual framework describing the relationship between the category of institutional civic participation and various characteristics of regional regimes as a factor in the results of the political and administrative process in the regions;
- 2) To determine the opportunities and limitations of the influence of civic participation on the results of the administrative reform of the 2010s and the waste management reform, taking into account the specifics of policies and the features of the Russian political system and its regional dimension
- 3) To determine the conditions under which institutional civic participation can be a significant factor of policy outputs in the regions;
- 4) Description of the effects of civic participation on the results of policy processes in the regions, taking into account the various features of

regional regimes and the characteristics of the reforms themselves, including the degree of attention of the population and the structure of civic participation channels.

Based on the theories describing the institutional structure of hybrid regimes and the key features of the policy process in them, the concepts of regional political regimes and concepts of civic participation in non-democratic regimes (in particular, the concept of authoritarian responsiveness), it is suggested that the institutional civic participation in the policy process is not a significant factor in itself. But given that *certain conditions exist that contribute to the “responsiveness” of regional authoritarian elites under the influence of “pressure from above” or “pressure from below,” the institutional potential of civic participation can be actualized and can have a real effect on the results of the policy process.*

To answer the research question, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1a:

in case when the outcomes of a certain policy are formally enshrined as criteria for assessing the activities of regional authorities, the greater dependence of the region on the federal center contributes to a significant influence of the institutional civic participation on the policy outputs in the direction corresponding to these criteria

H1b:

in case when a certain policy concerns an acute societal problem, the region's lesser dependence on the federal center contributes to a significant influence of the institutional civic participation on the policy outputs in the direction corresponding to the public interest.

H2:

the interaction of institutional civic participation with the level of authoritarianism of the regional political regime is a significant factor of the policy process; at the same time, the direction of the effect of the institutional



civic participation in more authoritarian regions is an opposite one to less authoritarian ones.

H3:

in regions with a higher level of patrimonialism, insitutional civic participation will be a significant factor of the policy process.

*Research methodology and methods. Empirical base and justification of the boundaries of the study.*

The theoretical basis for the formulation of hypotheses is based on the concepts of "authoritarian responsiveness" (Chen et al., 2016) and "limited pluralism" (Owen and Bindman, 2019), which describe the place of civic participation in the politic process in the structure of an undemocratic regime, as well as the theory of regional political regimes, which presupposes regional variation in several parameters. According to the concept of limited pluralism, in non-democratic regimes there are a relatively large number of channels of civic participation, the influence of which on the results of policies, nevertheless, significantly limited, firstly, due to the state's ability to control access to such channels and their agenda; secondly, due to the specifics of policy processes in such regimes: in most spheres, changes are closed in the policy subsystem, with some exceptions associated, first of all, with the processes of outsourcing the provision of public services - situations when actors external to the state are involved in services provision (as is often the case in social policy). The concept of authoritarian responsiveness helps to suggest when civic participation in a context of limited pluralism can have a significant impact on policy outcomes. According to this approach, developed on the basis of an analysis of Chinese empirics, local authoritarian elites can become "responsive" to civic participation if they perceive the situation as potentially risky for themselves: either in a situation of "pressure from below" (risks of protests and other forms of poorly controlled activities), or in

a situation of "pressure from above" (when the higher level of government is directly interested in achieving certain results of the political course). Based on various ideas within the framework of the concept of regional political regimes, I assume that the regions have certain characteristics that can contribute to the "activation" of the effects of "pressure from above" and / or "pressure from below" as potential factors of the significance of the influence of civic participation on the policy outputs.

**Methodologically**, this study is based on the principle of cross-regional statistical analysis within the cases of two Russian reforms. This research design allows, firstly, to draw well-grounded conclusions about the role of opportunities of civic participation as a factor of the regional dynamics of the policy process in each individual case. Secondly, comparing the two cases with each other helps to understand the extent to which the results obtained depend on the characteristics of specific policies. Finally, this design allows to achieve the necessary level of similarity of cases to minimize the influence of the broader context on the results obtained: the periods of reforms selected for the analysis coincide in time, and the epiphenomenal differences between the basic units of analysis (reform-region-year) are minimal due to the fact that they are defined by common features of national political system.

To study the significance of institutionalized civic participation in the policy process in the Russian regions, we analyzed the influence of this factor in the cases of two policies: the reform of the municipal solid waste management system (MSW) and the current stage of transformation of the public administration system.

The latter are a continuation of the activities within the framework of the administrative reform that started in the mid-2000s. Initially, the reform, the concept of which was developed by a team of experts from the Ministry of Economic Development and the Center for Strategic Research, was aimed at reorganizing state power, combating duplication of functions and introducing the principles of a new public management, at expanding the participation of civil society and reducing the administrative burden on business. Not all the initial goals were achieved, many important areas were "failed" (reducing the administrative burden on business) or

actually nullified (expanding civil and expert participation). Since the 2010s, the focus of public administration reforms has shifted towards the digitalization of service delivery processes and improving their quality. In line with this direction, lie the transformations that continued to be carried out in the second half of the 2010s: in particular, the development of a network of multifunctional centers for the provision of public services, the development of the electronic system "Gosuslugi", etc. Speaking about the opportunities of civic participation, it is important to note a certain closeness of the policy subsystem associated with changes in the public administration system. At the first stage of the administrative reform in the second half of the 2000s, decisions were made under the influence of two main advocacy coalitions: "reformers" consisting of experts from the Center for Strategic Development and representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade - supporters of the ideas of new public management and, in part, the 'public governance' approach; and "conservatives" - adherents of maintaining a clearly built hierarchy of civil servants and the absence of large-scale changes. The president, potentially able to act as a policy broker and to help achieve some compromise but more effective solution, was not interested in directly participating in the reform. As a result, as already noted, many of the initial ideas of the first stage of the reform were never implemented. Around modern stage of transformations of the public administration system, in our opinion, there is no clearly defined policy subsystem: there are no obvious coalitions of support for various alternatives, and the course pursued is largely determined by technocratic goals. Since there are no noticeable disagreements about alternatives, and the transformations are at the stage of implementation, civic participation is possible, first of all, during the implementation of various measures "on the ground" - in the regions. Thus, citizens can participate in the discussion of decisions at the regional level, being members of expert and advisory councils, taking part in public hearings or in assessing the regulatory impact of various regulations (today, not only experts, but also "ordinary" citizens can participate in it; there are digital delivery platforms), directly assessing the quality of service delivery. Nevertheless, the pro-active participation of "ordinary" citizens

in the policy process around changes in the sphere of public administration is unlikely, since this policy does not affect the most sensitive public interests.

Hence, the choice of cases is justified by the fact that, in addition to the obviously different specifics of policy spheres, these reforms implied a certain level of possible discretion of the regions. In addition, these reforms make it possible to assess the importance of opportunities for civic participation at different stages of the “political cycle” (Brewer and de Leon, 1983): decision-making (waste management reform), implementation of the adopted decisions (waste management reform, administrative reform). Another important substantive distinction is the different level of attention by the citizens and by the federal center to the respective policies. Thus, problems connected with waste management were (and are) acutely perceived by the population. At the same time, there’s much less public interest to the administrative reform, but some of its elements may be of core importance for federal authorities to increase state capacity.

To identify the conditions of the significance of institutional civic participation as a factor of the regional policy process, several regression models were built - binomial, ordinal and panel ordinal regressions - with the effects of interaction between the proxy variables of civic participation and the expected conditions for actualizing the influence of citizens. At the same time, in order to minimize the restrictions imposed by the ambiguity of the operationalization of the dependent variable, several specifications of the models were built for each case of the reform, using different methods of operationalization of the policy outputs.

To build statistical models, a database was prepared, which included various quantitative characteristics of all Russian regions in the period from 2015 to 2019 and metrics reflecting the policy outputs (for the waste management reform - for 2018-2019; for the administrative reform - for 2015-2019, depending on the method of operationalizing the dependent variable).

In addition, in order to illustrate the theoretical argument and validate and conceptualize several variables, data from interviews with participants of policy

processes were analyzed. I analyzed interviews with representatives of civic society, the expert community and the executive branch, which I took in 2014 during the study of the case of administrative reform in the Republic of Karelia (5 semi-formalized interviews, total duration 3.5 hours). I also used data from interviews with members of public advisory structures - representatives of civic society, the expert community, business and government bodies, collected by participants of a research project dedicated to the activities of public advisory councils of the city of St. Petersburg (16 in-depth interviews, total duration ~ 13 hours)

**The contribution of this research** is the identification of the conditions of the significance of the impact of civic participation on the policy process in a situation of a non-democratic regime. According to the results of the study, it can be concluded that these conditions include the characteristics of the (regional) political regime - the degree of transparency of regional administration and dependence on the center, which, if there is interest in the given policy on the part of the population and / or higher authorities, contribute to the manifestation of “authoritarian responsiveness” of regional elites. As shown above, there is a substantial body of literature that develops the thesis about the limited, but real impact of civic participation on the results of the development and implementation of policies in such regimes. The purpose of this study was, precisely, to determine the boundaries of such a real influence and the factors that set these boundaries.

In addition, the results of the study contribute to a broader discussion about the possibility of society to influence the political processes in a non-democratic regime in general. In modern literature, the point of view has been established about the institutions of public participation (elections, public consultative structures, public chambers, etc.) as of "substitutes" (Petrov, Lipman and Hale) or facade institutions designed, first of all, to facilitate the solution of certain tasks of political elites (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). However, there are already some studies showing that such institutions can be useful not only for the “survival” of elites, but also for “ordinary citizens” (Little, 2017). This study, developing the latter direction,

helps to understand what kind opportunities of civic participation in the policy process exist in the institutional structure of the hybrid regime and under what conditions these opportunities can be actualized.

## **Provisions for defense:**

1. Institutional civic participation, understood as a certain structural characteristic of the political system, reflecting the motivation and organizational capabilities of participation - the presence and stability of participation channels as well as their provision with resources, are not a significant factor in the political and administrative process in a non-democratic regime *per se*. However, given some conditions that ensure the "authoritarian responsiveness" (Chen et al., 2016) of the elites, the opportunities of civic participation can act as an institution that limits the strategic choice of regional elites, having a significant impact on the results of the policy process.
2. With regard to the policy process in the Russian regions, the key condition for the manifestation of authoritarian responsiveness was "pressure from above" if the federal elites were interested in pursuing a certain political course and "pressure from below" if the problem was particularly acute for the population.
3. The factors that determined the presence of "pressure from above" and "pressure from below" and, at the same time, the significance and direction of the influence of institutional civic participation on the outputs of the policy process, were certain features of regional political regimes: the level of political competition, transparency of regional administration and the degree of dependence on federal center.
4. An important implication of the work is the conclusion about the significance of interregional differences in modern Russia, which is characterized by a high degree of centralization of federal relations and an opportunistic model of regional policy. The conditions that make civic participation a significant factor in the political and administrative process

are connected precisely with interregional differences, which additionally indicates the usefulness of applying the theory of regional political regimes, even for the analysis of political processes in centralized formally federal political systems.

5. In regions with closed bureaucratic systems, some loyal societal actors (primarily expert and advisory councils) are more likely to influence the results of policies, due to the presence of informal ties with the authorities and the ability of the latter to isolate large sections of the population, which is confirmed by the results of the analysis reforms of the waste management system and reforms aimed at improving public administration.
6. In regions that are less dependent on the center, on the one hand, the potential costs of possible protest activity increase, which makes the elites more susceptible to pressure from below from the population as a whole in the event of a high level of civic activity in the region. On the other hand, in such regions, the authorities have more incentives to involve non-governmental organizations in the direct implementation of policies (if they are interested and have the opportunity), which increases the likelihood that civic participation will have a significant impact on the results of policies.

### **Research publications and approbation**

The main results of the research were published by the author in leading peer-reviewed scientific journals, including those recommended by the Higher School of Economics:

1. Tinyakov D. K. Public influence as a factor of policy process in Russian regions: conceptual (im-)possibility in a hybrid regime?] (In Rus.) // Bulletin of the Perm University. Series: Political Science. 2019. Vol. 13. № 4. P. 81-90.
2. Sungurov A. Yu., Dubrovskiy D.V., Karyagin M. E., Tinyakov D. K. Public consultative councils as a method of inclusion of expert knowledge in the



policy process (case of St.-Petersburg) (In Rus.) // Public Administration Issues. 2020. № 2. P. 7-31.

3. Tiniakov D., Sungurov A. Russian Administrative Reform: Better Outcomes through Broader Participation // Public Administration Issues. 2018. № 5. P. 133-144.
4. Tinyakov D., Sunguov A. Administrative reform and its projects in modern Russia: were there any advocacy coalitions? (In Rus.) // Social sciences and modernity. 2016. № 2. P. 39-51.

Other publications:

5. Tiniakov D. Reforms in authoritarian regime: suboptimal equilibrium and influence of an autocrat (In Rus.) // In Development of State and Society: Ideas, Subjects, Institutions and Practices / I. A. Pomiguyev, R.V. Savenkov (eds.). Moscow: - Aspekt Press, 2018. P. 241-243.
6. Tiniakov D. An autocrat and the “reformer’s dilemma”: administrative, pensions and tax reforms (In Rus.) // In Russian reforms: look from 2017. Collective monograph. / A. Yu. Sungurov (ed.) – Saint-Petersburg: Norma, 2017. P. 66-83.

Approbation of the research results took place in the following conferences:

1. Fifth Annual Tartu Conference on Russian and East European Studies, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia, 6-8 June 2021, presentation topic «Can citizens affect policy in hybrid regimes? Case of Russian waste management reform».
2. V Forum of young political scientists SMP RAPN, Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 8 December 2018, presentation topic «Reforms in an authoritarian regime: suboptimal equilibrium and influence of an autocrat».

3. XVIII April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development, HSE, Moscow, 12–14 April 2017, presentation topic «Three Russian reforms: comparative analysis of the actors of the process».
4. 7th Annual Aleksanteri Conference Russia's Choices for 2030, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, 25-27 October 2017, presentation topic «Russian Reforms in Regions: Is Authoritarian Modernization Everywhere Authoritarian?».
5. International seminar RAPN research committee on comparative politics IPSA research committee #48 on administrative culture. GtC2017 «Cooperative Governance: New Designs and Platforms for State-Citizen Relations in Public Policy», SPSU, Saint-Petersburg, 23–24 June 2017, presentation topic «Factors of the bureaucratic effectiveness in the regions of the Russian Federation».
6. First Annual Tartu Conference on Russian and East European Studies, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia, 12-14 June 2016, presentation topic «Administrative reform in Russia: comparing roles of officials, civil society and expert community».

### **Summary of the main content of the study**

In Chapter 1, I developed a conceptual justification of the conditions for the significance of the institutional civic participation as a factor of the policy process and the effect of such influence on the results of political courses.

The key concepts in this context are the institutional civic participation in the policy process and the concept of the results of the policy process.

In the context of the study, the policy process was understood as *the process of preparing and adopting a specific policy model and its subsequent implementation and evaluation*. (Nikovskaya and Skalaban, 2017, p.47) When talking about the results of the process, it is necessary to distinguish between the outputs carried out on the implementation stage and the societal effects of these events (outcomes) (Hill and Hupe, 2014, p.12). Evaluation of the latter from the

point of view of the success of solving socially significant problems is the task of public administration studies, economics, and disciplines special for the reformed sphere, but to a lesser extent it is included in the focus of political science. Within the framework of this study, the policy outputs are the dependent variable: the focus was on how and under what conditions civic participation in the policy process can affect the outputs of policy process: which of the initially planned actions are taken or not taken in the course of the implementation.

As a working definition of the concept of civic participation in this study, we used the definition of L. Nikovskaya and I. Skalaban: “these are the processes by which citizens directly or indirectly influence the decision-making by the authorities that affect public interests” (Nikovskaya and Skalaban, 2017, p.47).

In turn, institutional civic participation was understood as a certain structural characteristic of the political system (in this case, the region), reflecting the "saturation" of the regional political system with institutional forms of civic participation, the organizational capabilities of institutional forms of civic participation, characterized by the presence of "norms, rules, implementation technologies" (Skalaban, 132) (regulated procedures, associations of citizens, publicly - advisory bodies, etc.). These opportunities are determined through the availability of channels of participation, their stability and resource availability. The value component of the institution of civic participation in this work remains outside the scope of analysis due to the complexity of its objectivist operationalization and the difficulty of unambiguous interpretation of the results of possible measurement methods. Institutional participation was chosen as an element of the framework also because it is precisely such forms of participation that are more amenable to government control than non-institutional forms (such as protests). Thus, the research problem associated with the place of civic participation in non-democratic regimes is more clearly manifested: does it only perform the functions of ensuring the stability of the regime, or is it capable, through exerting a real influence on the results of political courses, to increase the usefulness for ordinary citizens?

**Chapter 2** describes the opportunities for civic participation in the policy process in contemporary Russia. Our conceptualization of the place for civic participation in the structure of the hybrid regime is supported by the materials of interviews with participants of the policy process in the subjects of the federation from the government, business and society (representatives of public advisory structures - public and advisory councils under regional authorities; representatives of the expert community). Respondents, on the one hand, describe various forms of possible civic participation: councils, public hearings, public chambers, complaints and protests. On the other hand, they note many opportunities for control over these channels by the authorities and a frequent disregard for the position of citizens (experts). At the same time, there are also conditions under which civic participation is more likely to lead to the fact that the interests of the community are considered: informal ties with individual actors, a greater level of political competition in the region, lesser dependence on the center. The second chapter also reveals in more detail the essence of the ongoing transformations within the framework of the policies under consideration, mentions their key features and points out possible channels for institutionalized civic participation. Thus, measures to improve the quality of the public administration (development of the MFC network, digitalization of the process of providing public services, etc.), being one of the elements of the current stage of administrative reform, are distinguished by the closed nature of implementation. Public advisory and expert councils under the government bodies are allowed to participate in these processes. Citizens in general can also participate through public hearings on draft regulations and direct evaluation of the quality of services. However, these potential channels for participation by the general public are unpopular due to the lack of public attention to administrative reform. The waste management reform, on the contrary, initially attracted the attention of citizens, being an acute issue from an environmental (elaboration of waste storage and transportation schemes) and economic (definition of uniform regional tariffs) points of view. In addition, civil organizations are directly involved in the provision of final services: many environmental NGOs

support and organize programs for separate waste collection, conduct research in relevant areas. All this led to more opportunities for civic participation than in the case of administrative reform: the issue was actively discussed in various public advisory structures (regional public chambers, expert councils, etc.), at public hearings, the position of NGOs on issues related to this policy.

**Chapter 3** is devoted to the statistical test of the hypotheses put forward about the interaction of the level of civic participation with the features of regional regimes as a factor of the policy process. A key finding from the analysis is that institutional civic participation can have a meaningful impact on policy outputs under the assumed conditions. However, the significance of this influence also depended on the characteristics of the policies themselves. Thus, in the case of the waste management reform, which is characterized by the increased attention of the population to the reformed sphere, two hypotheses about the conditions for the significant influence of the opportunities of civic participation on the policy process and the direction of such influence were confirmed: on the interaction effects with the closeness of the regional bureaucracy and lower dependence on the center. And in the case of measures to improve the quality of the public administration, the attention of citizens to which is practically absent, characterized by a predominantly closed nature of its implementation, only the interaction effect of civic participation with the level of openness of the regional bureaucracy were significant. In turn, the analysis of the regional dynamics of the administrative reform does not provide grounds for confirming the hypothesis that if the federal center is interested in pursuing a certain political course (its aspect), there is a positive influence of the effect of interaction of institutionalized civic participation with the degree of dependence of the region. The hypothesis about the interaction effect with the level of political competition was not confirmed in any of the models.

In the **Conclusion**, the results obtained and the prospects for further research are discussed. The main conclusion of the study is confirmation of the thesis that even in a hybrid regime, the institution of civic participation can have a significant impact on the results of the policy process, provided that there are a number of

factors that contribute to the manifestation of authoritarian responsiveness. One of the key factors of this kind is the presence of attention to the problems, first of all, on the part of the population. In this situation, in less dependent regions (where the costs of public discontent are higher), the effect of “pressure from below” is manifested, leading to greater responsiveness of the regional elites. A lesser level of transparency of regional administrations, associated with the opportunities of informal interactions (including more efficient interactions with the most loyal societal actors) with the state in general which are more effective in an undemocratic regime, lead to a similar effect. At the same time, the influence of civic participation in the described conditions is directed in accordance with public interests. However, in regions with opposite regime characteristics, a significant opposite effect of opportunities for civic participation was observed. When talking about regions with a high level of openness of bureaucracies and a high degree of dependence on the center, it is difficult to offer a simple explanation for the negative impact of opportunities for civic participation on policy outcomes. We assumed that this may be due to the fact that in the absence of effective channels of interaction with the state and in a situation where the elites are more dependent on the center and are not interested in good governance, civic participation in the policy process is not able to influence its outcome but the implementation of formally fixed, but actually useless mechanisms of "participation" leads to the inhibition of policy processes. This explanation does not follow from our theory and can only be perceived as an interpretation of the observed effects, therefore, requires further development.

Finally, with regard to the policies which only the center is primarily interested in (elements of administrative reform connected with measures to improve the quality of public administration), it can be concluded that the possibilities of real influence of civic participation in them are even more limited. Thus, it is worth noting that dependence on the center itself was a significant predictor of the policy results and had a significant effect regardless of the level of civic participation. This gives grounds to conclude that in Russian conditions the mechanism of “pressure from above” as a factor of actualizing the influence of citizens does not manifest itself. At

the same time, it works as an independent factor that directly affects the policy results: the federal center prefers to act without relying on civic society, directly using the existing structure of federal relations in the country.