

solving urban problems and the mismatch of approaches of effective managers and civil servants, which, of course, can further worsen the processes of municipal management. This, of course, excludes the possibility of achieving social and administrative solvency of city management, as the results of the reform will not meet its declared objectives.

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Chapter 9

Administrative and Social Consistency of the City Management Institution



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Abstract The chapter reveals the attitude of the elite of municipal corporations of the Republic of Adygea (Russia) toward the reform taking place in the territory of the Russian Federation in the form of the cancelation of procedure for the accession to an office of the head of the municipal corporation on the basis of the election in favor of his appointment under the contract by the competition committee. The survey has identified the presence of deep contradictions in opinions between the two groups of experts: experts of administrative authority and public experts. These contradictions are manifested in the assessment of goals of reform, the compliance of goals with current management practices, and the feasibility of a plan regarding the peculiarities of Russian sociopolitical and sociocultural conditions.

1 Introduction

Present-day Russian authorities are in permanent search for more optimal principles and structural interactions in the local government system. This search is reflected in the condition of legislation on local self-government, which is subject to either global or local reformatations taking place almost every year. This definitely indicates the intention of the ruling power elites to solve a set of existing problems simultaneously. These problems include the democratization of the management process (this requirement dates back to the late 1980s of the twentieth century), the achievement of management efficiency (primarily from the perspective of improvement of the socioeconomic indicators of territories), the creation of conditions for social stability (This syncretic term refers to the stability of major social institutions that have reached a certain level at which the authorities are able to provide favorable and socially acceptable conditions for the living of major groups) (Shmelev 2014). At the

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same time, there is no continuity in the transformations; reformers go around in circles; this goes to prove that an attempt to comprehensively address the listed problems has shown its inconsistency at the present stage (Ochakovskiy et al. 2015). It encounters both objective difficulties and subjective misunderstanding of the value and meaningfulness of the proposed reforms on the part of territorial communities. As a consequence, the problems of democratization of the local government have paled into insignificance today, and the achievement of stability and efficiency of the municipal corporation has been identified as a priority. The introduction of the procedure for the accession to an office of the head of the municipal corporation based on competitive selection (city management institution) becomes the most important link in the new stage of the local government reform (Dyatlov and Popov 2017). It is thought that that the new order will allow solving the problem of excessive politicization of the management of territories, their socioeconomic inefficiency associated with the lack of the necessary competencies of “people’s representatives” (Dyatlov et al. 2018). A city manager, as envisioned by authors of the new city management model—is a professional who is not politically motivated. The goal that is set before him is to improve the socioeconomic indicators of territories.

The target of research consists in the introduction of the city management institution within the territory of municipal corporations of the Republic of Adygea. The subject of research is the administrative and social consistency of the city management.

The proposed chapter is aimed at identifying the compliance of the declared goals of the city management reform with its actual results.

Achieving the desired goal involves completion of the two tasks as follows:

1. Determining the administrative consistency of the city management institution.
2. Assessing the social consistency of the city management institution.

2 Materials and Methods

The main method that was used to collect and process information for writing an article is an expert survey in the form of an interview. In terms of location, it was carried out in three populated localities of the Republic of Adygea: Maikop, Adygeysk, and Yablonevskoye townships. Parties that were identified as experts are as follows: (1) the chairman of the representative body of the municipal corporation and his deputy (deputies); (2) chairmen of standing and interim commissions (committees) and their deputy (deputies); (3) employees of local administration of city district (the head of local administration, deputies of the head of local administration responsible for various areas of activity); (4) employees of local administration of municipal district (representatives of the functional bodies of local administration: heads (deputy heads) of committees, directorates, departments, and divisions); (5) deputies of the representative body of the municipal corporation (city council/district assembly of deputies); (6) representatives of science (teachers);

(7) representatives of the media of municipal corporations, publicizing the problematics of reform of the local government system. A total of 30 experts holding leading positions in the city management system or having professional knowledge of how this system operates were interviewed within the Republic of Adygea.

The principle of separation of the entire set of experts into the two main groups was applied in the course of analysis of the database obtained: (1) representatives of administrative bodies (local government employees)—19 respondents and (2) the members of the public (deputies, journalists, and teachers)—11 respondents.

3 Results

Before we present the research results, we shall define the criteria which will serve as the basis for the conclusions on the declared subject. We suggest that administrative and social consistency shall be understood to mean the achievement of basic goals set before the city management institution. These are as follows: involvement of professional managers to improve the social indicators of territories.

Criteria of administrative consistency:

- Substitution of political competition with direct administration.
- Business cooperation between the branches of municipal corporation and cooperation of the administrative elite at the level of municipalities and subordinate entities of the Federation.

Criteria of social consistency:

- The lack of breakouts of discontent on the part of the people as a result of their exclusion from the politics in the capacity of the electorate via elections of the heads of municipal corporations.
- Actual improvement of the socioeconomic indicators of territories after the introduction of the city management institution.

Since we associate administrative and social consistency of the city management with the achievement of a goal set before him by the initiators of the reform, the first set of questions was aimed at identifying the priority areas in the activity of city managers.

Initially, we shall define the direct relationship of experts to the city management institution in terms of acceptance or disavowal of it (Table 9.1).

As we can see, more than one-third of local government employees show antagonism to the city management institution. When compared to deputies, journalists, and teachers (hereinafter referred to as the members of the public), where the majority of experts are disposed “negatively” toward him, the figure is small. But we need to take into account the loyalty to the initiatives of the superiors, which is conventional for administrative authority, in order to fully assess the scale of such a large number of elections by officials in favor of a negative statement about city management. Only 24% active proponents of the analyzed model have been

Table 9.1 How do you feel about the introduction of a managerial employee instead of popularly elected head of municipal corporation, in %

Answer options	Social status			
	Local government employee	Deputy	Journalist	Teacher
I disapprove such practice, and I will actively oppose it in future	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I disapprove such practice, but since it already exists, I wont oppose it	28.4	45.0	63.3	75.0
I favor such practice, but I will just watch the development of affairs	47.6	55.0	36.7	25.0
I favor such practice. And I will contribute to such actions	24.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 9.2 What was the primary goal of substitution of direct elections of the head of the municipality for the competitive selection procedure (one answer option only), in %

Answer options	Social status			
	Local government employee	Deputy	Journalist	Teacher
Economic (to improve the economic development of territories)	22.2	0.0	0.0	16.7
Political (to complete the formation of the vertical power structure)	33.3	50.0	50.0	83.3
To improve the professional competence of city managers	22.2	50.0	50.0	0.0
There were no specific goals (reform for the sake of reform)	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

identified, and all of them belong to representatives of administrative authority. Here, when assessing the very initial research results, it is extremely important to note that more than half of the experts disapprove it. This percentage figure could turn out to be even higher if the sample between the two groups of experts was proportionate, or if the burden of loyalty to the superior bodies of government did not put pressure on officials.

Further, we should determine whether the goal declared with regard to the city management institution (improving the professional competence of the city management and improvement of the social indicators of territories) complies with the realistic vision of it on the part of the two groups of the expert community (Table 9.2).

Hence, it can be easily seen that in the first group of experts (representatives of administrative authority) one-third of the total number of experts pointed the discrepancy between the declared goal and actual management practices. The remaining experts—approximately two-thirds of the total number—completely agree with the federal reformer and see no contradiction between the desired goal

Table 9.3 Relationship between the determination of goals for the city management institution and the attitude of the experts to it, in %

Answer options	Economic (to improve the economic development of territories)	Political (to complete the formation of the vertical power structure)	To improve the professional competence of city managers	There were no specific goals (reform for the sake of reform)
I disapprove such practice, and I will actively oppose it in future	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
I disapprove such practice, but since it already exists, I wont oppose it	0.0	89.9	11.1	0.0
I favor such practice, but I will just watch the development of affairs	33.3	16.7	33.3	16.7
I favor such practice, and I will contribute to such actions	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

and the actions for achieving it. As for the second group of experts (the members of the public), the situation is exactly the opposite of it. More than two-thirds of experts observe mainly political goals in the proposed reform and not nearly those that were declared by the reformers.

In this regard, it is interesting to us not only to evaluate the city management goals as viewed by the experts but also to compare the vision of the goals of this institution by respondents with the attitude to it that was identified earlier. This will enable us to obtain more opportunities for the assessment of administrative and social consistency of the analyzed city management model (Table 9.3).

If we associate the abovementioned negative attitude toward the city management institution with the goals that are identified with it, it is fair to assume that its disapproval by the experts was due to the discrepancy between the focus on improving the professional competence of the heads of municipal corporations declared by the government and actual practice, when city management is perceived solely as a new political institution. This is contrary to its declared focus on the improvement of the socioeconomic indicators of territories. When we analyze the data in the Table, we can see that in both upper columns, where negative judgments about city management are recorded, there is a distinct correlation with the statement about it as a political tool. The converse is also true: it is precisely those experts who do not see any political goals, associate the opportunity to improve the professional competence of city managers and to improve the socioeconomic indicators of territories with the city manager.

Table 9.4 What are the political goals of establishment of the city management institution (any number of answers), in %

Answer options	Social status			
	Local government employee	Deputy	Journalist	Teacher
To complete the formation of the “vertical power structure” to facilitate direct administration	47.6	80.0	66.7	50.0
To terminate all political connections and relations at the local level by substituting them for administrative relations	4.8	20.0	50.0	50.0
To eliminate the influence of the party factor on the procedure for electing the heads of municipal corporations	9.5	20.0	0.0	75.0
The opportunity to dismiss politically disloyal city manager at any time under the guise of their poor performance	33.3	40.0	16.7	25.0
The city management institution pursues no political goals	38.1	0.0	16.7	0.0

In this regard, we asked another question (advancement question) in order to check how important, the adjustment for assessment of the city management institution as a mainly political institution is for the experts (Table 9.4).

The vast majority of “public experts” gain sight of particular political goals in the city management institution. This is in no small degree characteristic of local government employees, too. However, the difference in assessments by the two groups of experts is quite significant. Most attention is drawn to the fact that only one-third of local government employees agrees with the statement that “the city management institution pursues no political goals,” although there were two-thirds of those before the follow-up question. This being said, the number of deputies, journalists, and teachers who agree with this thesis is even lower.

The intention to gain sight of political focus in the city management reform should not be treated as the diametric opposite of the goals of improvement of the social indicators of territories declared by the reformers. However, considering the fact that the majority of experts disapprove the already-existing working practice of city managers, one should wonder whether the city management institution has something different in it than just a further formation of the vertical power structure. Based on the identified frequency of choices when answering the question about the political goals of the city management institution, it can be suggested that experts fear the possibility of substitution of social and economic goals for direct administration at the local level, which is under the complete control of the federal government.

In this regard, a problem arises that needs to be resolved in the course of analysis of the following data: can the experts see potential within the city management institution that is able to improve both the professional competence of the heads of

Table 9.5 Do city managers have higher potential for improvement of socioeconomic indicators of territories as compared to popularly elected mayors, in %

Answer options	Social status			
	Local government employee	Deputy	Journalist	Teacher
Yes	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.9
The principle makes no matter; it all depends on each individual case	75.0	100.0	100.0	57.1

municipal corporations and the social indicators of territories? The presence of this potential may be indicative of consistency of the city management institution.

This is what the following set of questions consisting of three questions is designed to. Here, we will differentiate between the goals of the city management institution by different aspects, which will make it possible to bring them together into a single whole for the identification of sought-for “consistency” (or the lack of it) following the achievement of results. The first question invites the experts to compare the capabilities of a competitive manager and a popularly elected mayor (Table 9.5).

The members of the public chose the “no” answer option more often, and, accordingly, they never chose the opposite answer option, in which one could associate with the standpoint of the initiators of the cancelation of the municipal election. In this aspect, we also see a discrepancy in the assessments of consistency of the city management institution between the two groups of experts we have already identified. One cannot say that such discrepancy is major, since local government employees themselves, as well as the members of the public, associate the resolution of city management problems not with institutional models, but with a particular developing managerial situation. We tend to assume that it is a case of the business potential of a particular leader, his connections in the upper branches of power and business, literacy and competence. This data confirms the stereotype according to which the people of our country trust, not the institutions but people who have the necessary qualities for the professional activity.

The next question was directly related to the previous one, but it is intended to specificate the goals of the introduction of the city management institution from the perspective of the attitude of the official authorities.

The presented table contains three different conceptual approaches associated with the search for new sources of financing of municipalities: conventional American, expected Russian, and conventional Russian.

The first approach is focused on the fact that the city manager signs a contract with the representative body of local self-government, and the territorial community expects him to attract financial flows through his business channels. As a matter of fact, this is what this institution was introduced into the city management practice of the USA. In this situation, city manager is not only just an effective manager who distributes available resources but also actively attracts them from third parties.

Unfortunately, public experts strongly believe that the city management institution will not operate in Russia in precisely this manner (fourth column in Table). We intend to subject these doubts to a deeper study in the future. In the meantime, we only acknowledge their presence.

The second approach is based on the association of city management goals with the formation of an institutional model, ensuring political loyalty to the top branches of power at the level of municipalities. In this regard, new sources of financing of municipal corporations are seen as an adequate payment for loyalty (third column in Table). Moreover, this option was not often chosen by experts either. You might as well say it was ignored in actual fact. Since the city management has been existing for several years already, the heads of municipal corporations are either disloyal, which is unlikely, or this source is really of no use. In part, this result of unrealized expectations is attributable to the hidden anger about the city management institution on the part of representatives of administrative authority of municipalities.

The third approach focuses on the reproduction of the already mentioned stereotype about the absence of trust to institutions and organizations in Russia. Indeed, the majority of all elections of experts are oriented toward the statement of significance of a particular manager, regardless of the source of its legitimacy: contractual or mandated from voters. Here we can see either distrust of the practices of accession to an office in the legal system, or distrust specifically of the seat of power, or an ordinary manifestation of stereotype in the assessments of experts.

We tend to adhere to the explanation related to the absence of trust, which appears from the data of the first and second columns in Table 9.6. They contain about one-third of all expert choices. What is more, it is telling that the first option is based on a knowingly vitiated judgment. Indeed, the fact that the sources of financing are contained in applicable legislation not nearly means that a popularly elected mayor

Table 9.6 Will the city management institution change the local government financing principles for the better, in %

Answer options	Social status			
	Local government employee	Deputy	Journalist	Teacher
No, they are regulatory and are contained in applicable legislation	38.1	40.0	33.3	0.0
No, but it will make the use of financial resources more efficient	9.5	0.0	16.7	0.0
Yes, those managers who are loyal to the authorities in power will receive additional benefits both via budgetary and extrabudgetary channels of distribution of financial resources	9.5	0.0	16.7	0.0
The city manager has ample opportunities for attracting financial resources of local business communities for the economic development of territories	19.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Everything will depend on a particular manager	23.8	60.0	33.3	100.0

and a city manager have equal opportunities to use them, let alone their knowledgeable disposal. In addition, the municipal corporation does not always operate in legal space. Therefore, the inability to expand the sources of financing within the limits of the laws cannot be regarded as such a definite obstacle. Nevertheless, the experts chose a knowingly incorrectly formulated answer option. Why is that? Because some of them turned out to be deprived of the possibility to make a correct choice corresponding to their ideas, since they trust neither the mayor, nor the city manager, nor the superior bodies of government.

Further, we shall give consideration to the data on the last question of the analyzed set of questions. If the first two questions were associated with the socioeconomic indicators and the sources of financing of municipalities, the following is dedicated to the comparison of professional capabilities of mayors and city managers, the assessment of professional advantages between the two types of city managers (Table 9.7).

The research results again demonstrate the presence of inconsistencies between the representatives of administrative authority and the members of the public. On the one hand, this is not to say that the first group of experts turned out to be ready to gain sight of all kinds of positional advantages of a city manager over a mayor. None of the four answer options was selected by more than one-third of respondents, although the expert was given the opportunity not to limit himself in their number. If the proposed benefits were obvious for their experts (local government employees), then they would have been selected much more often. On the other hand, the option according to which a city manager has no advantages over a mayor (14.3%), turned out to be the least popular exactly with the first group of experts. Suffice it to point

Table 9.7 What professional advantages do city managers have as compared to popularly elected mayors (any number of answers), in %

Answer options	Social status			
	Local government employee	Deputy	Journalist	Teacher
Unlike the mayor, city manager can only engage in economic functions; he is not politically motivated	23.8	0.0	12.3	50.0
Poorly performing city manager can be fired ahead of schedule	28.6	0.0	16.7	0.0
The city manager has no political commitment to the people and is therefore able to get unpopular but necessary decisions over	14.3	0.0	10.7	0.0
The city manager is an executive professional who is elected by other professionals, unlike the mayor, who can only receive an appointment by using populist techniques during elections	33.3	0.0	9.0	0.0
The city manager has no professional advantages over the mayor elected by the municipal community	14.3	100.0	53.3	50.0

out that all the deputies surveyed, more than 50% of the journalists, and one-half of responding teachers agreed with the last answer option. It must be admitted that the discrepancy in opinions between the representatives of administrative authority and the public experts is very significant. We are not yet ready to hypothesize about these discrepancies. Further research is needed.

We believe that one just cannot ignore the contradictions in another group of figures: recognition of the presence of professional advantages of city managers over popularly elected mayors on the part of the local government employees, and, at the same time, a rather modest assessment of capabilities of the city managers in terms of improvement of the socioeconomic indicators of municipal territories and the change of their financing principles for the better. From our point of view, this contradiction can be justified by two mutually exclusive positions. In this situation, what is possibly meant here is either local government employees have demonstrated loyalty to the federal government and answered the analyzed question disingenuously, or they believe that city managers have certain professional advantages indeed, but they cannot unlock them in existing political and socioeconomic conditions. We are more inclined to opt for the last explanation. It calls for additional study of the circumstances and factors hindering the disclosure of the city management potential in the context of administrative consistency.

Experts' opinions were divided, which in fact reflects the hypothetical character of these judgments. It is difficult to tell definitely how voters feel about the cancelation of the mayoral elections. It is even more difficult to place their opinion in the value system by relevance. In any case, it can be assumed that even "policy fatigue" actually does not mean unconditional acceptance of restrictions on voting rights that were introduced.

4 Discussions

The current discourse regarding the results of reform involving the introduction of the city management institution makes it possible to single out several approaches (Dyatlov and Chigrin 2018; Dyatlov and Gurba 2014; Dyatlov and Sazhin 2015). With a certain degree of conditionality, we can combine them into three basic groups (Gafiatulina et al. 2018). The first group includes experts who are critical of the legislative innovation under consideration (Vodenko et al. 2018); the second group includes experts who concede significant institutional benefits in the long view from the introduction of the contract-based method for filling the vacancies of the heads of municipal corporations (Bedrik et al. 2016); the third group includes experts who proceed from the fact that the position of the city manager cannot be definitively assessed (Lubsky et al. 2016a, b). Within the last group, researchers see the main task in studying the already-existing experience, generating both positive and negative processes in the management of the municipal corporation (Lubsky et al. 2016a). The researchers should direct their attention to overcoming the latter.

A systematic analysis of the main author's attitudes on the issue of interest to us makes it possible to single out the following negative statements of experts about the

city manager institution. A.N. Neustroev draws attention to the lack of legitimacy in the procedure for the appointment of city managers. L.V. Akopov points out that a city manager, according to his status, is accountable not to the population whose interests he must represent, but to the representative body of the municipal corporation. This can potentially cause a problem of disregard of interests and opinions of voters. V.I. Vasilyev emphasizes that the expanding procedure for appointment of city managers is indicative of the desire of the state (federal center) to strengthen the vertical power structure to the detriment of the democratic principle in management. In addition, he also writes about disregard of a new model of such a constitutional guarantor as the right to judicial protection of the local government, since the city manager can be removed without legal proceedings. V.A. Ochakovskiy leaves open the possibility of strengthening within the framework of the analyzed model of corrupt practices, associating it with powerful capabilities of clandestine collusions with several interested parties in appointing officials. At the same time, the lawyer writes about corruption scandals already existing in the working practices of city managers. V.S. Avdonin proceeds from the premise that the contract-based model of appointment of city managers is capable of provoking an improvement of the competition of interests between the representative body and the administration, since the former acts as the source of legitimacy in relation to the other, but at the same time is almost deprived of supervisory powers (Chernous et al. 2015).

Still, there is another group of researchers who take a favorable view of the city management institution. A.A. Shmelev is confident of the fact that there is a division into political and economic functions in the work of a city manager, which makes it possible for the head of local administration to fully concentrate on the resolution of current issues in the activities of the municipality. V.L. Tambovtsev pays attention to the fact that the procedure of appointment under the contract in which the regional government plays an active role will allow combining efforts of the authorities of all levels for the joint resolution of administrative tasks. L.K. Bzegezheva appeals to a successful foreign experience of operation of the city management which is favored by political figures in the countries of Western Europe (USA), and researchers specializing in management issues. A.A. Volodin suggests the universal introduction of the city management institution, since the cancelation of municipal election will make it possible to spare funds for more efficient use of them. V.A. Ochakovskiy proceeds in his positive assessments from the presumption of depoliticization of the population, referring to the low voting turnout at the elections of the heads of municipal corporations. In this regard, a transition to the contract-based appointment of the heads of administrations, in his opinion, is the legalization of a more sophisticated procedure for the formation of local self-governing authorities (Volkov et al. 2017).

A more careful assessment of the two groups of opposing attitudes makes it possible to detect in them the relations of a dialectical nature: the same property of the city management institution is interpreted by its opponents or supporters in diametrical opposition to each other. For example, A.A. Volodin associates the cancelation of election with the possible cost savings, while L.K. Bzegezheva is confident that the exclusion of parties from the process of participation in election, on the contrary, will significantly reduce financial resources of local communities

due to their loss of interest in voters. In general, there are a number of common points for assessment, within which it would be much more efficient not to formally compare attitudes, but to reach a certain problematic level of their perception. If only because city managers have been existing as an alternative reality for management activities for 10 years already. And further, judging by the initiatives of the federal government, the overall trend will be to approve in practice this alternative only.

5 Conclusions

The expert survey revealed the absence of the possibility to make a general conclusion about the common administrative and social consistency of the city management institution. There are deep contradictions in opinions between the two groups of experts: experts of administrative authority and public experts. These contradictions were revealed already upon answer on the question regarding the attitude toward the tendering procedure for the accession to an office of the head of the municipal corporation. In the first (administrative) group of experts, two-thirds of respondents had a positive attitude toward the city management institution; in the second group, it turned out that the number of such experts from among public experts is only about one-third of the total number of experts. The correlation relationship of these connotations and the ideas of experts about actual, not declared goals of the city management institution showed that its negative perception is associated in both groups of experts with goal-oriented substitutions: one-third of the experts from the first group and two-thirds of the experts from the second group are convinced that in actual fact the reform is aimed not at improving the professional competence of the city management, but at strengthening of control over municipalities on the part of the federal government. The same proportions in the answers were clearly visible in other sets of questions when it was necessary to assess the professional qualities of the city managers, resource potential of the city management for the improvement of the socioeconomic development of territories, or to identify possible risks impeding both administrative and social consistency.

The experts of administrative authority rather highly assess professional advantages of city managers as compared to popularly elected mayors, but at the same time, they do not see any powerful capabilities to improve the socioeconomic indicators in them, which is the ultimate goal of the reform.

The assessment of the attitude of the group of public experts gave fundamentally different results. Negative connotations dominate here in almost all characteristics of the city management institution, ranging from doubts about the reliability of the declared goal to the actualization of the significance of almost all the risks that were proposed for assessment. The experts from this group also deny the presence of professional advantages of city managers over popularly elected mayors, see them as political appointees from the federal government, and deny their ability to consolidate financial and economic resources for the development of territories. In addition, they tend to put special emphasis on democratic procedures, including speaking on behalf of the entire territorial community. Hence, at this stage of concept

formation, we may call into question social consistency of the city management. It is necessary to conduct a full-scale study with the survey of population of municipal territories, which should merge into the project for studying the social consistency of the city management institution, since expert assessments alone are clearly insufficient for that.

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