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MAKING SENSE OF RUSSIAN CIVIL SERVICE REFORM: WHAT MATTERS IN EXPLAINING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS?

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Since the early 1990s, there have been a number of incomplete efforts made by the Russian government to modernize state bureaucracy. The first wave started during the early years of Perestroika and it coincided with the collapse of the Communist system. In 1997-2001, bureaucratic reform agenda has become one of the key priorities of the Russian government again. In 2001, Federal powers launched a set of comprehensive policy measures aiming to modernize the system of bureaucratic organization. However, research to date has paid insufficient attention to the model of public bureaucracy that the Russian policy-makers were trying to build. Furthermore, little attention has been attributed to the relationship between the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation, and accordingly, to the idea of measuring and evaluating civil service reform progress. This paper uses the insights of policy implementation research to evaluate the dynamic of civil service reform (CSR) in Russia. Based on the study of government and legislative documents, I observe that despite major efforts taken by the group of reform advocates to establish clear and coherent regulations in the area of CSR, the goal of comprehensive bureaucratic modernization has not been met. Data acquired in expert interviews with research community specialists, State Duma representatives, former city councilors and law makers, demonstrates that the outcomes of CSR implementation in Russia have resulted from the lack of coordination among various reform dimensions, which involved the difficulty of maintaining consensus around policy goals and the lack of regulatory coherence in the area of bureaucratic modernization process.

Classification: Z

Keywords: public policy, civil service reform (CSR), public administrative reform (PAR), institutions, continuity and change, policy formulation, policy implementation.

[1] National Research University, Higher School of Economics, Center for Institutional Studies, Post-Doc Research Fellow. Email: sinkina@hse.ru

1. Introduction

Political science literature on civil service reform (CSR) in Russia addresses several important issues, such as the timing, content, implementation strategies, and the inter-relationship of CSR initiative with parallel reform projects. What is absent, however, is a coherent vision of CSR based on the existing theory of policy change, including the framework explaining policy implementation process.

The process of public policy making is commonly described as a course of action rooted in principles of rationality and logical progression from one step to another. This process consists of at least four stages - policy formulation, policy evaluation, policy implementation and policy appraisal - each requiring proper assessment and adequate incentives for behavioural change. Sociological and psychological accounts repeatedly challenge the traditional definition of public policy making due to the systematic mismatches that exist between cognitive maps of policy formulators and policy implementers. Controversy also surrounds the question on where to draw the line between the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation.

Civil service reform represents a class of phenomena, characterized by the following major features: (a) concentration of costs in government; (b) dispersion of benefits (long-term effects of the proposed policy changes); (c) high administrative and technical content (policy requires coordinated efforts of public officials and institutions to ensure that it is carried; it is nearly always technically complex); (d) limited public participation; (e) long duration of the reform process (Thomas and Grindle 1994, 64).

This type of policy requires systematic government effort to minimize resistance from the dissatisfied interested actors. The type of reform we are dealing with requires the examination of target group behaviour (including the amount of change required by the reform), and the development of a clear vision of cause-and-effect relationship underlying the problems of bureaucratic 'incapacity' in a context of post-Communist transformation.

In Russia, the idea of bureaucratic modernization has been quite popular for a prolonged period of time. However, as everywhere in the world, shaping public policy, in this country, represents a complex and multidimensional process that involves the dynamic interaction between the context in which policy operates and various stakeholders (individuals and interest groups) promoting their own vision of a government's agenda. Groups and individuals involved in policy making often mobilize their resources to affect laws, regulations and funding priorities through education, mass media, lobbying and other methods. Needless to say, clandestine actors threaten to interfere in policy implementation efforts, thus undermining the capacity of the state to enforce changes.

This paper outlines the difficulties of implementing Russian civil service reform, over the last ten years. To account for the reasons behind the formation of a highly protracted implementation stage, I first provide chronological background of the observed case. Second, I gather and analyse data related to the dynamics of civil service reform implementation process.

Based on the existing literature, I discuss several competing explanations of policy implementation stage. The first explanation suggests that policy ambiguity has been used by the Russian government intentionally in order to avoid conflict over the goals of bureaucratic modernization. An alternative model suggests that the outcomes of policy implementation stage result from interaction effects among various alternative policy dimensions.

The limits of applying the aforementioned frameworks is that the typology proposed by the aforementioned frameworks is very schematic, and it uses only one dimension of policy ambiguity, which results from the stage of policy formulation. In fact, other dimensions resulting from policy formulation stage appear to be important. Among them are

not only clear and consistent goals, but also the number of actors involved in implementation, the scope of proposed changes, and reform management model (centralized versus decentralized implementation; agency entrusted with implementation process and other policy dimensions).

2. Background

Since the early 1990s, there have been a number of incomplete efforts made by the Russian government to modernize public bureaucracy. The first wave started during the early years of Perestroika and it coincided with the collapse of the Communist system. This stage included the enactment of the new Russian Constitution in 1993 and the development of the Federal law 'On the basic principles of the Civil Service in the Russian Federation' (1995, No. 66).

In 1997-2001, bureaucratic reform agenda has become one of the key priorities of the Russian government again. In 2001, Federal powers launched a set of comprehensive policy measures aiming to modernize the system of bureaucratic organization. The process of policy formulation in the area of CSR involved several important actors, such as Presidential Administration, The Federal Government, The Ministry of Labour, The Ministry of Economic Development, The Ministry of Justice and other ministries of the executive branch. The guiding principles of the reform movement, at the time, included the ideas of merit-based recruitment process, organizational coherency, effectiveness and efficiency of civil service organization.

In July 2004, the Federal Council passed Law no. 79 "On Civil Service in the Russian Federation" (Federal Law no. 79)[4], which became the focal point of the reform and its management. This law reinstated some of the existing policy implementation instruments of civil service organization, pointing to the goal of the reform as a set of measures aiming to create a professional body of civil servants.[5]

In retrospect, the stage of policy formulation consisted in the enactment of the following conceptual documents:

1. The Conception of Public Service Reform, backed by the Federal Plan, which included priority implementation measures with regard to the concept of State service reform (adopted by Presidential Decree No. 1496 on August 15, 2001).[6]
2. The Federal Program "Reforming the Public Service System of the Russian Federation (2003-2005)," (adopted by Presidential Decree No. 1336 on November 19, 2002); and finally,
3. The Federal Program "Reforming and Developing the Public Service System of the Russian Federation (2009-2013)," (adopted by Presidential Decree No. 261 in 2009).

The implementation stage involved the enactment of Law no. 79 and over 30 Presidential Decrees aiming to enforce new rules in such areas as recruitment, training,

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[4] Further Civil Service Law.
[5] This law included regulations on competitive recruitment procedures (Article 12), the use of pre-qualified pools (Article 64), the use of job descriptions (Article 47), the use of contracts for civil servants (Articles 23-41), the formation of government bodies remuneration fund (Article 51), the introduction of standards of conduct (Article 18), dispute resolution procedures (Article 69-70) and conflict of interest regulations (Article 19).
[6] Action Plan has been approved by the Decision of the Government of the RF, no. 1789-p of 25 in October 2005. For more information, see: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_56259/.

personnel management and reimbursement of civil service employees[7].

Research to date has paid insufficient attention to the model of public bureaucracy that the Russian policy-makers were trying to build. Furthermore, little attention has been attributed to the relationship between the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation, and accordingly, to the idea of measuring and evaluating civil service reform progress.

The key difficulty in explaining the dynamics of implementation stage in the area of civil service concerns the lack of reliable evidence on the outcomes this reform yielded more than a decade after the enactment of the first Action Plan. While the direct measures of bureaucratic reorganization process are non-existent, international research suggests that Russia's WGI government effectiveness index improved only slightly for Russia during the last ten years (from -0,46 in 2005 to -0.45 in 2010, and 0.18 in 2015), whereas its regulatory quality indices (-0,17; -0,37, -0,52) and rule of law indicators (-0.90, -0,77, -0.72) remained quite low.

In 2015, Transparency International (TI) ranked Russia 119 out of 165 countries on its Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and last place out of 22 in the latest TI Bribe Payer Index (BPI) in 2012. These indicators reflect the survival of the dysfunctional practices, which proliferated behind the scenes of comprehensive policy change.

Public officials' surveys conducted by the Russian Academy of National Economy (Borshchevskiy, Mahov 2001) suggest that the incentives offered by civil service institutions do not completely match the structure of public employees' motivation. Specifically, the study suggests that 65% of civil servants' motivation structure consists of material incentives, such as the level of pay, career opportunities and other social benefits offered by the government. As such incentives provided by the program of reform with its focus on the introduction New Public Management instruments significantly challenge bureaucratic interests.

In terms of major trends observed within the structure and composition of civil service institutions, the Federal Statistics Service suggests that the increase of civil service personnel in 1991-2014 constituted nearly 30% (the highest number of 868,151 people has been recorded in 2009). Another important criterion of bureaucratic modernization - stability of personnel - suggests that the average length of service increased from 5 to 10 years, whereas the number of employees serving tenure (more than 20 years) dropped down, leading the majority of younger civil servants to perceive their jobs as a temporary stage preparing them for the insightful career in other areas of labour market (Borshchevskiy, 2017, 112-113).

The analytical boundaries of the case of civil service reform in Russia have been difficult to establish due to the presence of multiple reform initiatives, which occurred simultaneously during the early years of Putin's Presidency. As an example, Public Administrative Reform officially started in 2003, at the same time as civil service reform, with the enactment of the Presidential Decree no.824 "On implementation measures of administrative reform in 2003-2004" (23.07.2003). However, PAR progressed faster than CSR, which resulted in its shorter follow-up reform program (covering the years of 2006-2008).

The Commission on Administrative Reform, using a managerial perspective for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of state institutions, set the goal of clarifying the functions and responsibilities of various state organs. As a result, a significant number of functions (5634 in total) were reviewed; 1468 of them were found to be "redundant", 263 – "duplicative", 868 – "subject to reformulation" (Konov, 2006, 4).

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[7] For more information, see Collection of legislation of the Russian Federation, http://www.szrf.ru/szrf/.

Unlike the majority of Russia's technocratic institutional projects, civil service reform dealt with the substance of public administration system, focusing on the formation and management of the civil service in all branches, including issues of bureaucratic recruitment, training, pay and promotion, discipline, and security of tenure. The ultimate goal of CSR – as it was proclaimed in the Conception No. 1496 (2001) - consisted in the formation of a professional bureaucratic corpus. The ideal model of bureaucratic organization advanced by the Conception rested on such principles as political neutrality, serving societal needs, professionalism, effectiveness, stability, as well as professional integrity of bureaucratic actors.

Considering the unsatisfying results of bureaucratic modernization process, this paper aims to contribute to the discussion of causal processes, underlying the formation of a highly protracted implementation stage in the area of civil service reform. The outline of this study's process consists of the review of policy implementation literature, the analysis of policy formulation stage and the assessment of evidence collected among policy experts on the triggering forces underlying Russia's bureaucratic modernization effort.

3. The State of Policy Implementation Research

There is a growing amount of international academic discussion on the issues related to the dynamic of administrative change process. A big part of this discourse focuses on issues of policy process, including the study of interaction affects, which accompany the enactment and implementation of government reform policies.

The prospects of applying policy implementation theories to the study of post-Communist change have rarely been considered in view of the amount of evidence required to generalize beyond single cases. However, some of the existing empirical questions require the use of innovative research designs aiming to apply the insights of policy implementation research within diverse policy settings.

Traditionally, there has been a clear division between the so called 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' theorists of policy implementation process (Matland, 1995, 146). The former assumed that implementation variables could be dealt with at the stage of policy formulation. The latter group of theories emphasized target groups and service deliverers, arguing that policy change is in fact made at the local level.

Top-down policy implementation theorists have so far provided us with the following advice for a successful implementation process:
1) Clear and consistent policy goals (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983);
2) Limited number of actors (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973);
3) Limited scope of the proposed policy changes (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983);
4) Reform management by an agency sympathetic with the policy's goals (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Sabatier 1986) (Matland 1995, 147).

When looking into the real problems policy formulators face, it is quite obvious that clear and coherent legislation is not possible in all circumstances. First, policy formulators may choose to circumvent funding problems or opposition by strategically setting unclear objectives. Second, the lack of expertise in a particular policy area may result in the development of the unfeasible reform objectives, or the development of policy implementation mechanisms which may be poorly connected with the pre-existing political settings.

Trying to address the limits of top-down implementation research, 'bottom-up' approaches argue in favour of gathering empirical evidence prior to the development of broader explanatory frameworks, which commonly fit data with pre-existing theories. 'Bottom-up' approaches argue that in order to understand the results of implementation, we have to study bureaucratic behavior, including the way bureaucrats think and act (Barrett and Fudge, 1981; Hjern and Porter, 1981; Lipsky, 1980/2010).

Both top-down and bottom-up perspectives face limitations in view of the fact that systematic mismatches exist between cognitive maps of policy formulators and policy implementers. Moreover, controversy surrounds the question on where to draw the line between the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation.

Based on the existing studies, O'Toole (1986) counted more than three hundred implementation variables, which have so far been referenced in major academic publications. This analysis suggests, however, that the list of components identified as important in each case is based on a perspective taken by individual research project. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), for example, emphasized the role of 'decision paths', actors and bargaining processes among the decision-makers throughout the course of policy implementation. Nakamura and Smallwood (1980) emphasized political disagreements over the goals and values of policy change. Finally, Kingdon (1984) argued that subgovernmental politics matters, because it affects the development of compromises among the participants of implementation process (Sabatier 2001).

While the number of policy implementation variables is growing on a case-by-case basis, most of the existing analytical insights offer methodological guidelines rather than a set of theoretical propositions about policy implementation dynamics. The current stage of policy implementation research consists in the development of theoretical insights aiming to move the analytical focus of political science scholars beyond a single issue or a single level of analysis. A limited number of policy implementation studies have argued recently that top-down and bottom-up perspectives could be used in reference to different cases, or even combined depending on the issue at question. Some of the most often cited perspectives, in this context, included Elmore's concept of 'forward' and 'backward' mapping (1979, 1985), which helps identifying potential problems by comparing cognitive maps of policy formulators and policy implementers; Sabatier's policy cycle perspective (1986; 1988; 1991; Sabatier and Pelkey 1987), which observes the development of policy as a function of political change, and Goggin's (et al.) (1990) communications model that places state implementers 'at the nexus of a series of communication channels' (inducements and constraints from the federal, regional and local levels) susceptible to distortions as a result of signal perception bias (Matland 1995, 151-152).

The Russian case of CSR may be reviewed from a number of competing policy perspectives, depending on where the analytical focus of case study scholarship takes individual researcher. The logic of path-dependency has been, so far, the dominant framework to analyse the trajectory of institutional transformation after the Soviet Union demise. However, this approach neglects the dynamic interplay among the variety of competing reform agendas during the current stage of Russian reform. Neither does it account for the tendency of the Russian government to engage with foreign experience in its effort to apply foreign experience.

The early stage of post-Communist transition in Russia witnessed the destruction of Soviet-era institutions, including the organizational 'core' of Russian nomenclatura system. Foreign experience has been applied to replace old institutions. This stage of Russian history has been accompanied by the formation of new rules, which have been grounded in a 'rushed' transfer of institutions from a variety of policy contexts.

The current stage of policy-oriented research in Russia (Kotchegura 2008; Oleinik 2009; Obolonskiy 2006; Krasnov & Satarov 2010; Borschevskiy 2011, 2014; Ovcharova & Biryukova 2015) highlights such features of civil service reform as stages, actors, policy objectives and obstacles to the formation of an effective civil service. What is lacking, however, is a coherent vision of CSR, based on a combination of ideational, interest-based and structural features, which account for political and institutional context, in which policy operates.

What do we know about the process of bureaucratic modernization in Russia? Is the field of civil service dominated by a single player or does it privilege rational advice? How do we explain multiple incomplete efforts made by the Russian government to improve regulation of civil service institutions?

The difficulty of studying CSR in a dynamic perspective concerns the lack of systematic data on the effectiveness with which certain rules and regulations have been applied. This limitation of policy research implies the use of an idiographic approach aiming to collect data prior to the development of theoretical insights concerning the causal processes underlying the problems of bureaucratic modernization.

Both rational choice and institutional accounts provide us with useful insights into the study of policy implementation dynamism. Matland (1995), for example, demonstrates that the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation appear to be interconnected according to the degree of conflict surrounding the reform process. Specifically, Matland (1995) suggests that policy ambiguity resolves conflict of values among various participants of the reform during the early stages of policy formulation. The choice of policy instruments is guided, as a result, by the degree of conflict/ambiguity surrounding the reform. In this model, four implementation modes are possible: (1) low conflict-low ambiguity model (administrative implementation), (2) high conflict-low ambiguity (political implementation), (3) high conflict-high ambiguity (symbolic implementation) and (4) low conflict-high ambiguity (experimental implementation) (145) – each of these types requiring the use of rather specific resources, e.g. administrative, political, symbolic and experimental resources in implementation stage.

Figure 1. 'Conflict-Ambiguity' Matrix: Policy Implementation Process

		CONFLICT	
		Low	High
AMBIGUITY	Low	Administrative Implementation *Resources*	Political Implementation *Power*
	High	Experimental Implementation *Contextual Conditions*	Symbolic Implementation *Coalition Strength* Example: Community Action Agencies

Source: Matland, R. 1995, 160.

An alternative model, which rests on the premises of institutional analysis, suggests that implementation stage may be viewed as a result of interaction effects among various components of the reform. Specifically, Chackerian & Mavima (2001) suggest that synergy', 'trade-off' and 'avoidance' effects occur among various reform components (or dimensions of the reform) depending on the dimensions of similarity of resource inputs and the time frame of the reform process.

Figure 2. Policy Interaction Types and Resources Similarity and Scale

		Scale of Resources Required	
		Small	Large
Similarity of Resources	Low	Synergy	Trade-off
	High	Avoidance	Trade-off or avoidance

Chackerian & Mavima (2001), p. 359.

The relevance of insights provided by the aforementioned studies is obvious from the fact that the Russian civil service reform represents a multidimensional process, which is influenced by conflicting goals, resource scarcity and rigid institutional boundaries established within the system of public administration. The implementation stage of civil service reform in Russia involves the dynamic interplay among reform components. Administrative, political, experimental and other policy instruments are being used to achieve implementation goals.

Taking into consideration the difficulty of situating the discussion of the Russian case of CSR in any of the observed perspectives (considering how little we know about the case), this study starts with the framework, which divides policy implementation variables into the categories of material, structural and contextual conditions of change (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983).

It is worth mentioning that the case of civil service reform is not a typical case - it represents only one class of phenomena characterized by the difficulty of mobilizing public support throughout the stage of policy implementation. The study of CSR is important due to the fact that it sheds light on the nature of the relationship between politics and administration. The discussion of issues involved in the relationship between political and bureaucratic actors implies a great deal of ambiguity due to the lack of data and policy appraisal tools. This discussion, however, should start with the identification of competing explanations of change process, including the unequal role various forces play in the development and realization of reform objectives.

4. Civil Service Reform Problématique: Questions and Data Gathering Techniques

The preliminary analysis of material, structural and contextual forces of change involved in the Russian case of CSR provides us with a wide range of policy implementation variables, among which are legislative support, reform finance, committed and skillful officials, clear and consistent reform objectives, and other important features of bureaucratic modernization process. The importance of each of the observed variables is not possible to establish unless a unique map featuring a variety of 'causal candidates' aiming to explain the relationship between the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation is established.

This study combines a variety of qualitative methodology instruments to collect evidence on the key variables underlying CSR implementation stage. First, the study relies on a collection of semi-structured interviews gathered among research community specialists, state duma representatives, city council members, community leaders, law makers and other specialists involved in the design of civil service reform project. The criteria for selecting interviewees were the following: a) the number of articles published in academic and non-academic journals; b) the level of involvement in policy formulation and policy implementation process; c) active participation in public administrative and civil service reform; d) knowledge of the Soviet and post-Soviet context (experience measured by the number of years spent in state apparatus). Contact information of experts involved in the reform has been accessed with the use of their official web-sites. Privacy of each individual interviewee has been respected based on the protocol, which included guarantees of anonymity and the use of consent form in each interview.

The analysis of expert interviews obtained by the author during the current wave of CSR under Putin pursued the goal of identifying reform stages, triggering forces of change (based on explanatory frameworks for the success or failure of the reform and their components), and the assessment of empirical evidence set against the identified explanatory variables of policy implementation process. Each expert interview included no less than ten open-ended questions focusing on experience and views of policy makers regarding the process of CSR implementation.

Beyond the analysis of expert interviews, the discussion of civil service reform relied on the study of government and legislative documents, public officials' surveys and other sources offering valuable insight into the dynamic of change associated with bureaucratic modernization initiative (specifically, surveys and official reports published by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, the Institute of Legislation and Comparative Law, the Federal Statistics Service, and the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration). These sources helped gathering empirical data on bureaucratic change process, including such issues as legal developments, structural and organizational implications of new programs.

The identification of 'causal candidates' behind the formation of a highly protracted implementation stage relied on the insights of cross-national examination of policy process, which identified the following criteria of policy process: (a) reform objectives; (b) causal theory underlying bureaucratic modernization efforts; (c) legislative framework; (d) the engagement of public officials in implementation stage; (e) reform funding; (f) reform communication strategy; (g) committed and skillful implementing officials; (h) interest groups involvement; (i) changes in socio-economic conditions, which do not substantially undermine political support or causal theory (adapted from Sabatier 1986, 24-25)[8].

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[8] This method of within-case analysis (which represents a variety of policy tracing process) has been conducted to identify which conditions of policy change process matter in explaining civil service reform development.

The guiding theoretical idea underlying this research suggests that interaction effects among various reform components and policy context set limits to what governments can actually do about the system of bureaucratic organization. Structural factors (legal, political and administrative boundaries) reflect the extent to which policymakers control their environment. Ideational factors constrain public discourse, shaping actors' responses to the structural conditions they face.

This study did not set the goal of identifying the causal weight of policy implementation variables mentioned by interviewees because the latter stage requires systematic improvement of data available on the reform. The primary goal of this research is thus to examine policy process and bridge the division between theoretical insights and empirical facts of Russian bureaucratic modernization process.

The limitation of qualitative methodology instruments is their inability to account for the frequency of events which appear under examination, as well as on the average "causal" weight of each variable (George and Bennet 2004, 20). However, the use of such instruments (including case study method employed by this study) is valuable due to the explanatory and theory-building capacity they offer. The method of process-tracing, in particular, allows observing the development of events in time, which is important in cases, where the chain of reasoning behind certain events is not clear, where hypotheses and 'theories of the case' are not particularly reliable, and multiple intervening variables affect the process in a way that requires additional scholarly scrutiny (George and Bennet 2004, 20).

5.1 Russian Case of CSR: The Dynamics of Policy Formulation Stage

Prior to the discussion of evidence accounting for bureaucratic change process in Russia, it is necessary to focus briefly on the dynamics of policy formulation stage, including the goals and mechanisms employed by the reformers to modernize Russian bureaucracy. This is necessary in order to understand the inter-relationship between the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation.

The history of civil service reform in Russia suggests that there have been a few major "interested actors" of the reform process, e.g. (1) policy experts, i. e. academic and research community advocating the model of merit-based professional bureaucracy, (2) the Federal Government, which set long-term objectives for the development of relevant policy initiatives, and finally, (3) the group of policy implementers represented by various levels and layers of Russian bureaucracy.

The federal government set generic goals, such as the reduction in the number of civil service employees and the development of legislative bases for the improvement of human resource management procedures (recruitment, education, pay and promotion of civil service employees). Accordingly, the early Conception of public service reform (Presidential Decree no. 1496, August 15, 2001) offered a long list of policy objectives, focusing on the increased level of professionalism, organizational coherency, effectiveness and efficiency of public bureaucracy.

Governance discourse in the area of CSR suggests that there have been at least two major considerations for the reform of Russia's bureaucratic corpus. One of these has been the deteriorating quality of institutions, which progressively undermined public trust in government. The second problem concerned the lack of hierarchical subordination within the system of bureaucratic organization, which undermined state operational capacity and legitimacy of the newly elected political leadership.

The timeline of policy formulation stage in the area of CSR covers the entire period of post-Communist transition. During the early 1990s Civil Service, Law no. 119 (1995) was

developed moving the entire body of civil service legislation away from the Soviet Labour Code (this law introduced a career system of bureaucratic organization). During the second half of the 1990s, policy experts from the leading research institutions in Russia took steps to advance the idea of open, merit-based system of bureaucratic organization. Draft Law on Public Administration Reform, introduced by policy experts in 1997-1998, criticized the existing legislative framework for the lack of relevant policy implementation procedures (Krasnov and Satarov 2010). Ideas advanced by policy experts at the time suggested that civil service legislation needed to move as far away from the Soviet heritage as it was only possible.

Starting from the early 2000s, the federal strategy in the area of CSR has been guided by the 'mixed' strategy aiming to 'marry' the diverse principles of neo-Weberian perspective with the principles of New Public Management paradigm (NPM). The first set of principles of this strategy pursued the goal of constraining the discretionary powers of public officials with the detailed and narrow regulations. The second set of principles encompassed such goals as political decentralization, citizen/customer orientation, community empowerment, and the introduction of market forces in the operation of government institutions.

It is well known that the New Public Management has traditionally focused on administrative modernization, including performance-motivated public management and the use of integrated economic, sociological and other advanced conceptual models. These ideas have provided a good starting point for the development of innovative policy proposals. However, the realization of innovative policy objectives required significant bureaucratic capacity to 'absorb' changes.[9]

Implementation stage of civil service reform under Putin consisted of the enactment of Civil Service Law no. 79 (2004), which has been accompanied by the list of regulatory procedures (Presidential Decrees) aiming to enforce new legislation. Among major criticisms of Law no. 79 has been the unreasonable number of exceptions to the rule of merit-based recruitment, which has been the core principle of policy proposals advanced by policy experts since the late 1990s. To exemplify the nature of ideational conflict, surrounding the reform, one of interviewees observes that out of over 200 amendments introduced during Parliamentary hearings, on the clarification of the principles of meritocratic recruitment, only 40 were actually accepted. The idea of open competitive hiring process has been largely undermined by the final version of Law no. 79, which contained an extended list of "exceptional cases", where the rule of competitive hiring process could be avoided.[10] Presidential Decree no. 112 one year later extended this list of exceptional rules further, thus making the enforcement of competitive hiring procedures even more difficult.

The stage of policy formulation process in the area of CSR has been characterized by the lack of agreement among major interested actors involved in the reform concerning the goals and values underlying bureaucratic modernization effort. In addition, the stage of policy formulation has been characterised by 'expedited decision-making', which has been part of Russia's decision-making tradition aiming to limit the scope of public discussion surrounding the case of CSR. In view of ideational split, some Ministries participating in policy formulation stage, such as The Ministry of Labour, advocated the need to establish a neo-Weberian bureaucracy with clear lines of subordination, the detailed analysis of civil servants' duties and career incentives promoting the idea of life-long employment. The Ministry of Economic Development, by contrast, advocated the need to incentivize civil

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[9] One of the channels of policy diffusion process, which led to the creation of a mixed reform strategy, included 'Action Plan for State Service Reform in the Russian Federation' developed by the World Bank (2002), which pursued the goal of strengthening external accountability, transparency and culture focused on performance and outcomes. The World Bank contributed to the program not only financially, but also technically and ideationally with the use of "targeted analyses of international approaches in similar reform areas" (Ibid).

[10] For more information, see Law no. 79, Article 22.2 "Admission to Civil Service and Recruitment Based on Competition".

servants to work more productively, thus recommending the use of short-term contracts and performance-based pay to improve operational capacity of civil service institutions. The final version of Law no. 79 emerged as a result of consensus among various ideas and interests involved in the reform. Some of the most progressive ideas (such as performance-based pay) became part of Law, though conditions for the enforcement of relevant implementation procedures were not created.

An authoritative source suggests that the key features of Russia's decision-making process, at the time, included the so called "departmental" or "agency based" approach to public administrative reforms. This approach produced useful, yet uncoordinated reform efforts, and as such, resulted in the development of incoherent legislation:

> Given our relatively weak civil society and political parties, the main forum for representation and reconciliation of interests is provided by the executive authorities. Accordingly, government agencies and departments are the main actors involved in shaping the political agenda, as well as in its implementation. But the departmental (agency) approach to reforms is limited by definition. A radical agency project is a breakthrough in one relatively narrow area and is out of line with the general state of the public sector and public management. Such a breakthrough, first, is rarely successful on its own; second, it tends to produce unexpected effects in related areas; and third, it implies "bridge building" between the sector under reform and its environment. Such "bridges" include the numerous amendments to laws, which make them internally inconsistent. In addition, any agency, whether reform-oriented or conservative, tends to try to increase its influence and facilitate the performance of its functions (Anonymous Interviewee, 2010).[11]

Overall, the dynamic of policy formulation stage in the area of CSR has been driven by the increasingly complex reform strategy and the lack of consensus among policy-oriented and 'status-quo' interests. The body of expert proposals set the stage for comprehensive reform program (experts acted on the demand of the Federal government seeking expert advice). However, the course of events, which accompanied the enactment of Law no. 79 revealed the difficulties of policy proposals passing the stage of Parliamentary hearings. The discussion of civil service reform, both in public and in State Duma, during the early years of Putin's presidency, has been limited. The enactment of civil service procedures occurred in expedited mode, which revealed the power of 'anonymous forces' opposing the idea of comprehensive bureaucratic modernization.

5.2 Analysing Expert Interviews: Policy Implementation Narratives and Policy Implementation Dynamic

The analysis of expert interviews conducted by the author suggests three dominant policy implementation narratives - each accounting for the inconsistent nature of bureaucratic modernization process.

The first narrative – shared by the majority of interviewees, including academic experts and government insiders, revolves around the concept of policy leadership and lack of commitment to the goal of bureaucratic modernization process. This narrative suggests

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[11] Accordingly, the list of conditions, mentioned by interviewees as being significant throughout the stage of policy formulation (specifically, with respect to expedited decision-making), includes 1) the domination of the executive branch of power over the processes of policy formulation and policy implementation; 2) the diminishing accountability of political parties, represented in the Russian Parliament, to the public; and finally, 3) the lack of transparency combined with a growing insularity of the decision-makers (Interviews 2010).

that the success of civil service reform largely depends on the motivation of the reformers and their willingness to enforce civil service legislation. Theoretical ideas underlying this type of reasoning suggest that there are at least three categories of reasons to reform civil service. The first of this is ideology, or a set of ideas that paradigmatic shift in the ways of thinking and doing things is required to modernize bureaucracy. A second category of reason involves political considerations. In this case, administrative and bureaucratic modernization processes is viewed as being the product of efforts to create, transform or realign power bases of the top-level political elite. Finally, the last group of reasons for reform mentioned is instrumental. This explanation is based on nearly universal consensus that major steps are required to keep pace with institutional developments in parallel reform domains.

The second major narrative, identified by expert interviews, points to the broader organizational conditions of policy change, such as the structural and cultural attributes of Russian bureaucracy (the size, composition, organizational coherency), influencing bureaucratic capacity of the Russian state to absorb changes. The Russian case of CSR offers a valuable source of insight for the type of reasoning linking the delay of policy implementation stage with the regularly presumed conflict of interest among bureaucratic and administrative actors. Evidence suggests, for example, that immediately prior to the reform, nearly 75% of the higher-ranking civil servants consisted of personnel employed after the years of Perestroika. The remaining group of policy implementers (lower-level civil servants) included public employees who started their careers prior to the collapse of Communism (Brym 2004).

The observed cleavages in the structure and composition of public bureaucracy served as a major source of cognitive discontinuity among policy formulators and policy implementers. However, this account requires further explanation of the dynamic underlying implementation stage, because the cases of open bureaucratic resistance were not regularly reported.

Finally, the third narrative of policy implementation process explains the delay of policy implementation stage with such consequences of regime change as the lack of clear and coherent 'theory of change', ideational crisis and the lack of expertise in the area of human resource management after the demise of Communism. During the Soviet times, the Communist Party (specifically, its multiple local organizations) provided the primary channel for the recruitment of civil service employees. Political loyalty remained one of the guiding principles of hiring decision-making processes, which left the heads of administrative divisions with vast discretionary powers in the application of personnel recruitment norms. When the Soviet system dissolved, the ideological and organizational principles of once stable bureaucratic system have quickly vanished, which led to the development of 'ad-hoc' measures aiming to establish the new legal bases for the Russian system of public administration. Civil Service Law no. 119 (31.07.1995) introduced the idea of professional career-based system of bureaucratic organization. This law has been criticized due to the lack of coordination in developing relevant policy implementation procedures.

It is noteworthy that the size of Russian bureaucracy increased sharply prior to the collapse of communism. In 1985, for example, the total number of state service employees, excluding party members, reached nearly 2,03 mln people. During the years of post-Communist transition, the number and composition of state bureaucrats underwent considerable changes, which led to the initial reduction of public employees. The trend of bureaucratic growth resumed rather quickly, leading to the nearly uncontrolled expansion of state bureaucracy[12].

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[12] For more information, see The Federal Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, http://www.gks.ru/

The size of state bureaucracy influenced the results of CSR in a less obvious manner than its spatial and organizational characteristics. Geographical cleavages observed by the Federal Statistics Service suggest that, in the beginning of 2001, the number of state officials in various regions ranged from 4 per 1,000 population in Ingushetia (Caucasus region) to 58 per 1,000 population in the Evenki Autonomous region in the Far North, with the national average standing at 8 per 1,000 (Brym 2004, 96). The "density" of state officials in a region has been sensitive to budget constraints. The total number of employees per region (size) varied depending on the organization capacities of regional administrations.

In 2014, the group of civil servants who work in regions in both the federal and regional organs of power at the level of Russian regions constituted 715,9 thousand, or 43% out of the total number of civil servants employed by the state. There were also 326.6 thousand municipal workers, or 66.6% out of the total number employed by municipal organs and electoral commissions.

The share of regional bureaucrats working in regional organs of power increased 2.25 times over the period of Putin's presidency (in a period of 2008-2016, the share of bureaucrats within regional jurisdictions constituted nearly 30%). The total number of municipal servants increased 2.07 times over the same period, while the figure for federal civil servants increased by just 1.6 times. The number of civil servants has been growing despite the rise in unemployment levels – for example, in 2009, the level of unemployment in Russia increased from 6.3% to 8.4%, whereas the total number of civil servants in Russia increased by 1% (from 1,102,000 to 1,114,000 people).

Since 2011, the number of Federal level employees started dropping across regions. This process has been accompanied by changes in the structure and composition of Russian bureaucracy.

Table 1. Changes in the number of civil servants (2001-2016)

	2001	**2005**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**	**2016**
Total number	548,728	684,202	827,503	827,503	786,400	758,775
Legislative	10,511	11,989	13,099	12,857	12,427	11,544
Executive	443,376	556,760	710,949	667,142	624,035	587,230
Judicial/Procuracy	89,923	105,672	131,966	135,055	136,165	145,459
Other	2918	7610	9900	10365	11479	12200
Federal civil servants	407,047	498,853	634,814	634,814	564,490	541,452
Regional civil servants	141,681	185,349	233,337	221,645	221,910	217,323

Source: Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service, 2017.

5.2.1 Incentives for CSR Implementation at the Regional Level

An important institutional prerequisite of the reform is the structure of Russia's federal-regional arrangements, including the division of responsibility for personnel management across the federal and regional-level jurisdictions. One of the most important institutional features of all Russian bureaucracy is that its activities are financed out of federal, regional and municipal budgets. Starting from the early 2000s, Russia used incentives to promote its government reform agenda. Mechanisms employed by the Federal powers included mandatory legislative framework and competitive finance mechanisms.

However, the bulk of competition-based transfers went to the administrative rather than civil service reform process, which means that administrative reform process, in a sense, 'stole' resources from the domain of bureaucratic modernization. Selection criteria for individual regions were not equally enforced. Performance targets for the achievement of personnel management objectives included, among others, the status of institutional reforms, assessed through the numerical reduction of bureaucratic corpus, the level of employee turnover, the use of contract-based system and introduction of performance based system.

5.3 Evaluating the Organizational Obstacles to the Reform

While the observed explanations of bureaucratic change process (interview narratives) focus on the ideas of reform leadership, bureaucratic capacity to absorb changes, and the strategy of the reform process, the relationship among the observed variables of policy implementation is far from being straightforward. Methodological challenges of policy-oriented research focusing on the dynamic of civil service reform concern the uncertain means of policy leadership operationalization and the difficulty involved in identifying appropriate data sources for the analysis of reform dynamics.

Case study methodology employed by this research, allows reconstructing events in time, which is helpful in defining key variables and key stages of policy implementation process. This research methodology allows observing events in time and identifying the level of congruence between evidence of bureaucratic change process and the policy implementation narratives provided by policy experts.

Methodological guidelines on variable operationalization, which accounts for the willingness and capacity of executive branch to act upon their official objectives, has not been sufficiently developed. Some of the existing research originating in the ideas of comparative agendas project (Baumgartner, F.R., Green-Pedersen, C. and Jones, B.D. 2006) and the work of political philosophers (Bradshaw, A. 1976) appropriated recently by rational choice theorists (Tsebelis 1995) points to co-existence of 'obvious' and 'hidden' agendas of policy actors, which is difficult to track in a complex system of change, such as the case of expert-driven civil service reform. Principle-agent models of organizational behavior, have also been useful in explaining the undesirable outcomes of organizational change with conflict of values among the top-level and low-level bureaucracy in public organizations.

The choice of an appropriate theoretical framework for the discussion of the Russian CSR is complicated by the fact that there has been a number of top-level political actors involved in the development of civil service reform proposals. During the late 1990s - early 2000s, policy experts acted on the request of the Federal government seeking advice on the means of administrative modernization. However, the course of legal institutional transformation over the last decade suggests that reform leadership has been split over the goals and mechanisms of bureaucratic modernization process, which led to the enactment of incoherent legislative framework.

When scrutinizing the process of policy implementation in the area of CSR, the following organizational obstacles to the reform stand out.

1. In the period of 2005-2017, there has not been a single independent agency responsible for the development civil service reform as a coherent project. Multiple institutions involved in the design and implementation of civil service policy included Executive Office under the Presidential Administration on Issues Related to Civil Service, Civil Service Council, the Ministry of Trade and Social Development, the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Ministry of Social Protection; the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation.

Some of these ministries (such as the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Economic Development) held rival positions on the institutional and ideational prerequisites of the reform (Borshevskiy 2014).

2. In the period of 2005-2010, there has been little effective, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of CSR program. The level of research 'uptake' (expert knowledge absorbed by government agencies) has been equally limited, suggesting that the program of CSR was accepted for its ideological appeal without proper investments in policy implementation stage (Interviewees 2010).

Parliamentary hearing materials, for example, offer strong evidence for the involvement of bureaucratic actors in policy formulation stage (the stage of the juridical assessment of Law 79). Furthermore, evidence suggests the delay of implementation stage due to resistance of key 'veto' players, such as the Ministry of Finance opposing the introduction of new public management rules and procedures.

3. Finally, the history of reform finance provides us with a conflicted account of policy-makers' commitment to CSR. Official sources, for example, demonstrate that, in two consecutive years of 2008 and 2009, the Federal powers have spent around 960 million rubles and 481,600 thousand rubles accordingly on public administration reform program. The Program of Civil Service Reform, on the other hand, was funded in the amount of 539,100,000 rubles from 2003-2005 (for 2 years), and in the amount of 691,000,000 rubles in 2009-2013 for the entire period of 4 years.[13] Thus implementation stage of civil service reform has been regularly underfinanced.

The amount of initially allocated material inputs has been significant so far as it has been effectively spent and distributed. Evidence on this account suggests two major considerations. One of them concerns the unequal share of funds invested in the stages of policy formulation and policy implementation (the lion's share of government finance went to a variety of research projects, whereas implementation funds were quite negligible). The second problem concerns the impact of government expenditure on civil service reform success – during the early 2000s, coordination mechanisms among budget allocation and civil service reform were not clear, whereas research funds did not increase the likelihood of comprehensive bureaucratic modernization.

Out of all resource inputs identified by interviewees, the delivery of information about the reform to its target group suffered from the lack of consistency and mobilization effort. The initial stages of the reform relied on the idea that laws were self-executing documents. Therefore, none of the existing layers of public bureaucracy was fully engaged in policy implementation stage (Interviews 2010). Public officials' surveys conducted by the Institute of Legislation and Comparative Law under the Russian Government demonstrate that five years after the start of the reform there has been a large pool of civil servants in Russia who did not understand or share the goals of CSR. In 2008, nearly 50 % of bureaucrats surveyed reported the lack of awareness about the goals and ideas behind civil service reform. Another 33.3% reported activity that did not go in line with the existing legislative norms (Tikhomirov and Gorokhov 2009, 297-298).

Clandestine nature of bureaucratic resistance prevents us from identifying the sources of civil servants' dissatisfaction. However, one vivid example has been provided by income declaration procedures, which pursued the goal of making bureaucracy accountable to the public. In 2009, the Ministry of Labour developed extensive regulations requiring all civil servants, including their family members to file their income declarations online in order to provide conditions for public scrutiny. State Duma excluded adult children from the group of family members of senior bureaucrats and thus redrew the original draft of this policy

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[13] For more information, see The Federal Program "Reforming and Developing the Public Service System of the Russian Federation (2009-2013)," (adopted by Presidential Decree No. 261 in 2009).

proposal. This legislative maneuver made the idea of income declaration procedures rather useless – the real value of assets owned by civil service employees, since then, has been difficult to evaluate.

It is noteworthy that Law no. 79 excluded some groups, such as teachers, doctors, regional governors, judges, and other top-level political appointees, from the category of civil servants, which in turn reduced the size of Russian bureaucratic corpus. Income declaration procedures, however, covered all groups of senior employees, including civil servants and state servants whose duties and obligations were stipulated by the Russian Constitution.

Some of the existing research suggests that the reasons for clandestine resistance to reform may be attributed to the challenging nature of policy proposals and public discourse surrounding the case of CSR during the early 2000s. Barabashev et al. (2007), for example, suggest that the goals proclaimed in mass media during the early stages of the reform (such as the need to reduce the number of civil servants), threatened bureaucratic interests. As a result, when reforms commenced, bureaucracy [was] willing to defend itself thus undermining the process of CSR implementation (Interviews 2010). Policy discourse, which focused on the ideas of NPM (effectiveness and efficiency) was hardly useful, as it revealed the tendency of the federal authorities to challenge the key interests of influential policy players.

The latest years of CSR implementation suggest that the Federal government came to realize the usefulness of engaging public officials in civil service reform discourse. Steps have been taken to summarize law enforcement practice in the area of personnel management and to provide the detailed guidelines for the application of relevant norms. E-governance project in the area of public administration led to the creation of an official web-site 'Gossluzhba', which collects data on civil service vacancies and open competitions. However, the process of merit-based recruitment is neither closely monitored nor fully regulated by the Federal legislation[14].

The striking peculiarity of competitive hiring process in Russia is the co-existence of two major routes of bureaucratic employment. One of these is an open competition, which is regulated by Article 22 of Law no. 79[15]. According to the existing Law, open competition is conducted in all cases except for contract appointment to the position of departmental director (rukovoditel') or assistant director (advisor), including cases where these appointments are made by the President, and appointment of a person from the pool of civil servants, which is formed on a competitive basis, as well as in a case of temporary contract position. Exception to the rule of open competition is also provided by appointment to the junior position of civil service, on the decision made by employer's representative.

The second route of competitive recruitment is provided by selection of candidates into the pool of civil service personnel (rezerv kadrov), which is formed as a result of preliminary examination procedures held among qualifying candidates. In line with Article 64 of Law no. 79, Federal and regional-level jurisdictions establish their own personnel pools[16]. Candidates to prospective job vacancies have varying backgrounds and experience; they are recruited both internally and externally.

Official data suggests that there has been a gradual increase in the number of employees hired on a purely competitive basis in Russia over the last several years. In 2009-2013, the share of civil servants who joined the ranks via competition grew by 30 %, whereas

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[14] Presidential instructions as of 2012, (following up on the Decree No. 261 in 2009) set the goal of making civil service system more accessible to the public. The latter goal was to be achieved by raising the share of independent experts in civil service examination commissions up to 50%, by including compulsory examination procedures for departmental heads, and by investing more resources into the means of electronic communication between state and society.

[15] Detailed guidelines are provided by Presidential Decree no. 112 (01.02.2005)

[16] Detailed guidelines are provided by Presidential Decree no. 96 (01.03.2017).

the share of vacancies filled out of civil service personnel list increased by 50 % (Borshevskiy 2014). The use of candidates pulled from the list of prospective employees as a result of pre-arranged competitions seems to be more widespread than the use of direct competitive procedures, which is justified by efficiency concerns allowing state organizations filling positions in a short period of time without additional expenses involved in competition. This gradual 'takeover' of principles justifying efficiency as opposed to the idea of purely competitive recruitment is quite symptomatic of limitations characterizing civil service regulation. It also represents one of the observable 'trade-off' effects, which occur among a variety of co-existing policy instruments.

Beyond open competitive recruitment, civil servants retain their jobs as a result of competency validation procedures (attestatsiya) held once every three years in most departments and as a result of examination or re-examination process for senior job appointments.

Research conducted among public officials (Magomedov 2013; Borshevskiy 2011) suggests that one of the gravest concerns interviewees share regarding competitive hiring procedures includes the unregulated nature of evaluation process and the informal way in which evaluation procedures are held. Data provided in the following table suggests that the application of civil service recruitment procedures varies depending on the extent to which authorities follow all of the required norms. Regulatory discipline appears to be higher in Moscow than country average. Competency validation and examination procedures are less formalized, meaning that procedures of open competition provide better incentives for departmental heads to follow the rules established by law.

Table 2. Survey Results on Personnel Recruitment/Reinstatement Procedure

Personnel Recruitment/ Reinstatement Procedure	Formal		Rather Formal		Rather Informal		Informal		Difficult to say	
	RF	Moscow	RF	Moscow	RF	Moscow	RF	Moscow	RF	Moscow
Validation (attestatsya)	25,0	15,6	28,3	20,0	26,7	11,1	16,7	28,9	3,3	24,4
Examination (ekzamen)	21,1	22,2	37,7	26,7	22,8	4,5	13,2	13,3	5,2	33,3
Competition (konkurs)	34,2	17,8	23,7	24,4	17,5	15,6	7,1	22,2	17,5	20,0

Sources: Borshchevskyi & Mahov 2011; Magomedov, 2013; Borshchevskyi 2014, p.73.

Nearly 42,4% of public officials interviewed (Magomedov 2013; Borshevskiy 2011), consider patronage to be the dominant principle of bureaucratic recruitment process. This is explained, as mentioned, by the unregulated nature of personnel management system in Russia (lack of clear guidelines) (34,1%), and the inferior role of professional practices in personnel recruitment process in general (23,5%) (Magomedov 2013; Borshevskiy 2011).

Data on pay structure and average tenure of civil service employees suggests that, despite the increase of payroll expenditures (within the period of 2011-2014, payroll expenditures of the Federal government increased 1.7 times), the share of employees leaving the ranks of bureaucratic corpus within the first five years of their service remain

comparatively high (Ovcharova L.N., Biryukova S. S. 2015). The share of bureaucrats serving tenure (more than 15 years) is approximately the same as the share of employees occupying jobs for a period of less than 5 yeas. The observed numbers suggest that even though the 'core' of Russian civil service is quite stable, incentives originating in material and non-material conditions (pay, career opportunities and other dimensions of the reform) do not keep the youngest and dynamic employees in their jobs.

Table 3. Average Tenure of Civil Service Employees

Years	Less than 1 year	From 1 to 5 years	From 5 to 10 years	From 10 to 15 years	More than 15 years			Total
					Total	15-25 years	More than 25	
2008	69365	226,484	180,476	142,984	226,997	159,934	67063	846,307
2009	65645	226,814	194,059	126,271	255,361	175,437	79924	868,151
2011	59638	188,222	208,534	122,732	248,317	171,516	76801	827,503
2013	63602	166,911	185,720	131,933	238,234	162,523	75711	786,400
2016	51917	159,594	157,100	148,583	241,581	166,504	75077	758,775

Source: Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service, 2017.

Federal Budget expenditures allocated to cover the costs of paying civil servants (the easiest way to measure the costs of maintenance of the civil service apparatus) increased starting from the early years of post-Communist transformation. However, during the subsequent stages, the dynamic of change has been somewhat incoherent, with the general trend of increasing civil servants' salaries to the level, which is considered competitive. From 1997 to 2007, government expenditures to cover the costs of maintaining employees increased from 104.8 billion rubles to 265.4 billion rubles. However, by 2014, the decrease was up to 126.8 billion, which is lower than the level of state expenditures in 1994 (186.6 billion) (Borshevskiy, 2017, 114).

5.4 Empirical and Methodological Insights

Taking into consideration the dynamic of CSR implementation over the last 15 years, one has to ask some of the following questions: (1) What are the reasons for the lack of coherent and comprehensive regulation in the area of CSR? (2) How do we explain the split of policy leadership regarding the goals and means of bureaucratic modernization process? And finally, (3) What are the prospects of bureaucratic modernization in Russia in future?

The observed evidence of bureaucratic modernization process in Russia suggests the importance of contextual factors, such as the role of executive leadership with its financial, administrative and ideational support, and the initial prerequisites of the reform, such as bureaucratic capacity to absorb changes influenced by the size, composition, organizational coherency and other features of bureaucratic organization (e.g. the structure and composition

of Russia's decision-making bodies and a set of priorities established by the Federal government with respect to the goals of administrative reorganization). However, all of these factors influence the results of CSR indirectly, shaping the outcomes in a less obvious manner than the ongoing bargain among political and bureaucratic actors.

The underlying logic of civil service reform reveals the dynamic interplay among the unequal players of bureaucratic reform. As a result, the early stage of the reform is characterized by efforts to reconcile opposing ideas and interests among the key 'veto players', whereas the stage of policy implementation is marked by the lack of comprehensive regulation and the unequal enforcement of civil service norms.

To understand the intractable nature of policy implementation practice, it is important to consider that the field is sensitive to issues of power, including such questions as where power resides, whose decisions prevail, and which questions get public attention. Therefore, the limits of what government can do are set by the pressure of dissatisfied interests, which inform the bargain around competing reform agendas.

Thomas and Grindle (1994) suggest that implementation success in policy areas, which require significant government inputs, is influenced by the extent of legitimacy and autonomy of the existing government. First, if regime is stable and has an extensive legitimacy base, it is more likely to gain support of the public. Second, if it depends on a few extremely powerful interest groups, it would be more difficult to ensure consensus among the top-level political elites concerning the goals of reform (65).

The assessment of political and administrative resource invested in Russian CSR reveals the informal power of state bureaucrats, who gained momentum after the change of political leadership during the late 1990s. The diminishing role of policy experts engaged in bureaucratic modernization process suggests that bureaucracy has moved to the stage where it enjoys enough room to maneuver and where resources invested in CSR allow maintaining rather than undermining status-quo interests.

The difficulty of bureaucratic modernization process may be explained by the fact that state output legitimacy rests with daily affairs of mid-level and top-level bureaucrats, and that executive leadership, as well as the body of senior civil servants rely heavily on state bureaucrats in such daily affairs. Co-existing reform agendas (such as bureaucratic modernization and executive recentralization) complicate the process of bureaucratic modernization further influencing quality of relevant implementation procedures. Because of political preoccupation with hierarchical subordination, the government, until recently, has forgone the use of such management tools as clear and coherent evaluation criteria and other important elements of bureaucratic reform process. Significant resources have been invested in alternative reform dimensions, such as the introduction of hierarchical subordination principles into the daily affairs of senior bureaucratic corpus.

It is possible to conclude that the field of CSR is neither dominated by any single force pressuring bureaucrats to give up their hidden privileges, nor it is likely to fully absorb expert or rational advice. The factors that influence the performance of government bodies are many and complex and involve the relationship among political and bureaucratic actors, who adjust slowly to the goals of institutional transformation.

The analytical perspective, which follows from this study suggests that conditions mentioned by interviewees may be divided into the categories of initial and outcome processes. One of the main preconditions for civil service reform success, for example, is that at least a rough consensus exists within society and among the political elites that civil service reform is necessary. The lack of a normative consensus among bureaucrats may lead to the adoption of ambiguous reform models or incoherent (fragmented) policy implementation. At the same time, it is also important to adopt contextually appropriate reform strategies, which depend on the driving forces of change, including the willingness

and capacity of policy leaders to formulate contextually appropriate reform projects. The subgroup of causal processes influencing implementation stage include such elements of reform strategy as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which may account for the extent of political engagement (including political motivation to achieve change).

Table 5. Summary of policy implementation variables structured along the lines of initial and outcome processes involved in bureaucratic reform

SUBGROUP OF INITIAL CONDITIONS	SUBGROUP OF INITIAL CONDITIONS	SUBGROUP OF OUTCOME PROCESSES

Policy Leadership
Commitment (policy continuity)
Legislative support
Financial resources
Support from legislators
Comprehensive regulation
   Targeted support of specific policy areas
	Reform Strategy (Structural)
	Adequate causal theory of bureaucratic incapacity:
	• Clear and consistent objectives
	• Comprehensive reform strategy
	• Reform management model
	• Target group behavior properly evaluated
	• Implementation structure
	• Monitoring and Feedback mechanisms
		Policy Context
		Public support
		   Socioeconomic variables
		   Rule of law
		   Bureaucratic organization (size, composition, coherency)
		   Commitment from implementing officials

Source: Policy implementation research.

Table 6 – Characteristics of various dimensions of the reform

Reform	Time Period	Conflict Level	Ambiguity level	Required Resource Type and Scale	Resource Similarity	Interaction Type	Success
Rationalization	Short	Low	Low	Administrative Resources	High	Reinforcement	Limited success
Merit-based recruitment	Long-term	High (clandestine)	High	Political, administrative Coalition (political cost)	High	Trade-off	Variation, intractable outcomes
The development and improvement of payroll mechanisms	Medium-term	Low/Medium (clandestine resistance to the idea of performance management)	High	Administrative; Experimental Resources (institutional barriers, comprehensive change cost)	High	Trade-off, avoidance	Old institutions prevail
Ethics, anti-corruption	Long-term	High, clandestine	High	Political, administrative	High	Trade-off, avoidance	Variation, Intractable outcomes
Civil Service Reform management	Long-term	N/A	N/A	Administrative, political (high political cost)	Low	Avoidance	N/A

5.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, CSR in Russia, regardless of how little attention it received, is a deeply conflicted political project that has stumbled over the lack of agreement concerning the future developmental trajectory of the Russian state. The goals of the reform were not fixed. Moreover, interest-group involvement became possible during the stage of implementation leading to the enactment of rules with massive ambiguities and exemptions to the key principles outlined by the earlier policy documents. The nature of policy implementation, which prioritized the goal of rationalization, took over some other important reform dimensions of the reform. However, the major limitation of implementation stage concerned the difficulty of maintaining consensus around policy goals and therefore the lack of capacity of the Russian state to achieve the necessary level of regulatory coherence.

In reviewing 'tradeoff' effects among various policy ideas and instruments of CSR it is important to consider that one out of many competing reform areas – the process of political centralization - undermines the goal of achieving paradigmatic shift in the ways of thinking about the relationship between the society and the state. First, this process eliminates the possibility of budget reform, leading to the delay of results-oriented pay system. Second, this process diminishes the transformative capacities of regional bureaucratic systems.

While the number of intervening variables involved in implementation stage is immense, the study suggests that interaction effects among various reform components and policy context set limits to what reform advocates can actually do about the system of bureaucratic organization. The ongoing bargain among political and bureaucratic actors influences the results of policy process, making the possibility of achieving clear and coherent regulation rather fragile. Contextual factors, such as the structure and composition of Russia's decision-making bodies, the difficulties of research uptake, and a set of priorities established by the Federal government with respect to the goals of administrative reorganization represents the subgroup of reinforcing conditions. These conditions shape outcomes indirectly, as they support options available to policy actors in their effort to avoid legal certainty.

APPENDIX
Table 7. Dimensions of bureaucratic reforms in Russia (selected areas)

	Public Administration Reform	Civil Service Reform	State Budget Reform
Reform Rationale (official documents)	Economic efficiency, competitiveness issues, state-led developmentalism	Professionalism, serving societal needs, stability, legal protections, developing civil service ethics	Economic efficiency, greater transparency in the process of budget planning
Comprehensive versus Incremental approaches	1991-2001 –incremental adaptations 2001-2010 – comprehensive modernization strategy	Since 2001, CSR is viewed as a part of comprehensive state-building initiative, including Public Administrative reform	Since 2004, State budget reform is viewed as a part of comprehensive state-building initiative, including Public Administrative reform
Implementation stage	Bureaucratic model (comparatively more successful)	Bureaucratic model (Protracted, incomplete)	Bureaucratic model (Protracted, incomplete)
Policy instruments	-Framework legislation and secondary laws at the federal and regional levels; -Reform Programs and Concepts.	Framework legislation and secondary laws at the federal and regional levels Reform Programs and Concepts. -Some dimensions are not strongly enforced, especially at the regional level -Between 2003-2005, adoption of CSR implementation documents lagged behind, preventing regions from moving forward	2005 - the start of budget reform[17]; introduction of spending accounts and other features interconnected with performance management; changes to the horizon of budget planning (2007); changes to the budget classification system (2009); limited application of decentralized management of public finance; rationalization of relevant institutions with the goal of improving their quality
Engaging in strategy formulation , communication strategy	-Input at a high political level through the Federal Council -Advisory Councils for the officers of Presidential Representatives in Federal Districts	Limited input at a high political level; limited application of engagement strategies (seminars; information published in a form of methodological guidelines)	Limited input at a high political level
Constraints	The size of public administration Lack of accountability and control The decreased levels of state autonomy	Scope, clarity and coherency of reform objectives Bureaucratic interference in implementation stage	(1) Resistance to the idea of performance management by selected ministries (2) Administrative capacity: -the lack of expertise in the development of performance budgeting (the use of information about

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[17] For more information, see Постановление Правительства Российской Федерации от 25.12.2004 N 842 «О внесении изменений в порядок разработки и реализации Федеральных целевых программ и Межгосударственных целевых программ, в осущест- влении которых участвует Российская Федерация»; Постановлением Правительства Российской Федерации от 22.05.2004 N 249 было утверждено Положение «О докладах и основных направлениях деятельности субъектов бюджетного планирования»; постановление Правительства Российской Федерации от 19.04.05 N 239 «Об утвержде- нии Положения о разработке, утверждении и реализации ведомственных целевых программ».

			performance in budget planning process) - the lack of coordination among various strategic and tactical goals of budget planning
Shared policy goals	1) minimizing bureaucratic discretion (administrative decision-making power); (2) minimizing bureaucratic control over resource distribution (one of the most notorious legacies of the Soviet past), (3) cutting down the number of civil servants, and finally, (4) minimizing bureaucratic control over information (with the use of expert analysis of decisions taken at various levels of public bureaucracy)		
Reinforcement effects	Administrative regulation process in the framework of PAR (reinforcement effect among administrative regulations and civil service reform standards)	Federal Law no. 79 includes the following features interconnected with performance management, e.g. contract requirements, service standard (dolzhnostnoi reglament); performance based pay.	Instruments of administrative management: reports on the goals and achieved outputs (DRONDy), financial plan, djudzhetnoe assignivanie, gosudarstvennoe (munitsipalnoe) zadanie
Approaches	-Limited application of New Public -Management instruments – contradictory tendencies within the power pyramid (state institutions are weak, public bureaucracies are strong)	A mixture of New Public Management and neo-Weberian principles in the organization of Russian civil service system	Results-oriented budget planning process – the use of information about government program results in budget planning process (limited application)
Reform Management	No single agency responsible for reform Major actors: Commission on Public Administrative Reform The Ministry of Economic Development	No single agency responsible for reform Limited effort to promote common values across the civil service organizations	No single agency responsible for reform

Table 8. Dimensions of Civil Service Reform Project (selected areas)

	Rationalization	Merit-Based Recruitment Process	The development and improvement of civil service payroll mechanisms	Ethics, anti-corruption	Civil Service Reform Management
Reform Rationale	Developing comprehensive legislative framework for a coherent civil service system	Effectiveness and professionalism with the use of up to date personnel management techniques	Incentives to boost greater professionalism	Control over bureaucracy	Development of a centralized reform management process
Resources Required	Administrative	Political Administrative	Administrative Experimental	Administrative Political	Political
The scope and the	Comprehensive change, the	Incremental adaptations	Incremental adaptations requiring	Incremental adaptations	N/A

scale of resources required	scale of resources required is modest	requiring the use of political resources	comprehensive change in parallel policy field (budget planning process)	requiring the use of administrative and political resources	
Implementation model	Bureaucratic/administrative (low conflict-low ambiguity)	Symbolic (high conflict[18]-high ambiguity) Experimental (low conflict-high ambiguity)	Experimental Low conflict /high ambiguity	Symbolic (High conflict/high ambiguity)	Symbolic (High conflict/high ambiguity) Political (High conflict/low ambiguity)
Constraints	A lack of consensus building; Complexity of arrangements	Capacity constraints	Complexity of arrangements requiring reform in parallel policy fields	Capacity constraints	A lack of consensus building
Reinforcing policy dimensions and ideas	Administrative regulation process in the framework of PAR (reinforcement effect)	Administrative regulation in the area of personnel management	Administrative regulation process in the framework of PAR (reinforcement effect) Targeted Program «Electronic Russia» (2005), allowing for the automatic follow through on effectiveness and efficiency indicators of state administration	Anti-corruption legislation (Law No.273, 2008)	Framework legislation committing itself to the goal of creating a coherent system of civil service reform management (Programs and Concepts)
Competing policy dimensions and ideas, obstacles to reform	A very complex nature of changes required for the reform	Ambiguities and exemptions of policy implementation mechanisms; lack of enforcement	Limited application of New Public -Management instruments – contradictory tendencies within the range of incentives available to bureaucrats;	Ambiguities and exemptions of policy implementation mechanisms; lack of enforcement	Tensions between centralization-decentralization pressures originating in legislation
Reform Management Style	No single agency responsible for reform	No single agency responsible for reform	No single agency responsible for reform	No single agency responsible for reform	No single agency responsible for reform
Engaging in strategy formulation, communication strategy	-Input at a high political level with the use of framework legislation and research project finance	Seminars with lower-ranking public officials; publishing relevant information, including guidelines to support the use of	Seminars with experts and high-ranking public officials	Seminars with high-ranking and low-ranking public officials; publishing relevant information,	N/A

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[18] Clandestine resistance to reform; conflict is not visible, yet present

		procedures		including guidelines to support the use of procedures	
Achievements	Comprehensive legislative framework has been created	Comprehensive legislative framework characterized by massive exemptions to the rule of merit-based recruitment; The increased use of personnel pool	Non-comprehensive legislative framework characterized by inconsistent experimental cases of policy implementation	Non-comprehensive legislative framework characterized by massive ambiguities	N/A

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Svetlana Inkina

National Research University, Higher School of Economics, Center for Institutional Studies, Post-Doc Research Fellow. Email: sinkina@hse.ru