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FACTORS OF WORKPLACE INITIATIVE AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS IN SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Factors of Workplace Initiative among Civil Servants in Subnational Government [3]

Working Paper

Abstract

The paper investigates institutional and personal factors of workplace initiative among Russian civil servants using a unique dataset (N=1860) gathered in one of the Russian regions. We sampled nearly the entire staff of the regional and municipal governments to look at the determinants of organizational initiative. We estimate the factors of workplace initiative and show that in the Russian context modern theories of public sector motivation may not be applicable in the same way as in Western contexts. Particularly, we demonstrate the presence of "coerced" extra-role behavior that is not stemming from self-determination but is prescribed and demanded by the top management. Respondents report practices of overwork associated with the lack of clarity of job expectations. These negative perceptions are more widespread among lower level civil servants and among women. Other aspects of workplace initiative are also present, such as workplace innovation and helping others, they are more prevalent among higher-level civil servants. Religion has not been found to be significantly related to workplace initiative. This research contributes to the public service studies in the Russian context.

JEL Classification: D73, H83

Keywords: Initiative, Organisational theory, Principal-agent theory, Self-Determination theory, Intrinsic motivation, Public sector, Russia

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1 Introduction

The field of public administration is traditionally dominated by studies of the Western countries, such as the US, the UK, Australia, and Western Europe. But some of the effects are likely to differ for non-democracies due to the difference in motivation and incentives of those pursuing a public sector career (Liu & Tang, 2011). Such parameters as hiring process, career promotion criteria and performance management systems (Kalgin, 2016) are different. Also different is the cultural context. At the same time, not many of the current researches specifically address those differences (but see Gans-Morse, Kalgin, Klimenko, and Yakovlev, 2017; Hanna and Wang, 2013; Banerjee, Baul, and Rosenblat, 2015).

All in all, the gap in non-democratic public service research waits to be covered. To address this issue, we conducted a survey in July 2021 in one of Russian regions.

The focus of this study is on workplace initiative - an extra-role behaviour of employees that contributes to the functioning of their organisation but is not specified in their job descriptions. We attempt to assess the behaviour of Russian civil servants in light of two competing theoretical traditions in organisational theory: the principal-agent theory and the theory of intrinsic motivation and self-determination.

This research contributes to the public service studies in the Russian context. With a unique dataset gathered in one of the Russian regions with nearly entire staff of the regional government we look at the determinants of initiative among civil servants.

2 Literature review

2.1 Workplace initiative research

The perception of the employee role is changing. Enterprising qualities and workplace initiative become expected from a modern employee, blurring the line between a manager and employee (Campbell, 2000). This trend is reaching the public sector and calls for hight attention to personal initiative at public workplaces. Grant and Ashford (2008, p. 3) highlights the "increasing importance of proactivity in organizational life". Something that was important for the private sector has now reached the studies on the public sector organisations. Organizational initiative is one aspect of proactive organizational behavior. Grant and Ashford (2008) offer an integrated theory of organizational proactivity drawing on the theoretical resources of organizational psychology.

Personal initiative has described as one of the "focal proactive constructs" in the literature on organizational proactively (Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010). The authors provide a comprehensive meta-analysis of 103 publications on organi-

zational proactivity and explore the link between personality traits and proactive behavior.

Frese and Fay (2001) note the link between the concept of personal initiative and other related concepts such as ", organizational citizenship behavior, innovation, entrepreneurship, work performance, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation" (Frese & Fay, 2001, p. 133) . They also observe that "Personal initiative enables people to deal with job difficulties more actively" (Frese & Fay, 2001, p. 133). Personal initiative is conceptualized as work behavior that is self-starting and pro-active.

Among many aspects of proactive behavior one underlying feature is bringing change in the organization (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006).

Grant, Parker, and Collins (2009) note an important issue related to proactive behavior in organisations: "Although proactive behavior is important in organizations, it is not always appreciated by supervisors" (p.31). This observation informs out research question on the link between workplace initiative and rewards for extra-role contributions. On the one hand rewarding proactive behavior may stimulate employees to exhibit more of it, on the other hand crowding out theory suggests that intrinsic motivation may be reduced by giving tangible rewards. In their study Grant, Parker, and Collins (2009) focused on the behavior of supervisors and the likelihood of them rewarding pro-social behavior. We, however, focus on the employees and their perception of the likelihood of rewards form their supervisors.

Workplace proactive behavior has been found to depend on leader-member relations and linked with higher job satisfaction. (Li, Liang, & Crant, 2010). Leader-follower relations have been shown to be important in promoting organizational proactivity (Zhang, Wang, & Shi, 2012). A leader's on proactive personality is important in simulative proactive behavior among employees. In our study we do not test leader-subordinate relations directly, however we assess the effect of perceived organizational rewards on workplace initiative.

Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007) in an elaborate study of different dimensions of organizational proactivity has found that "Self-reports of proactivity were positively correlated with two external measures of proactivity", this is in line with out findings in this paper. The authors offer a conceptualization of proactive behavior that allow to formalize many aspects of organizational citizenship and initiative and link them to rewards. Furthermore, the authors describe a way to include in job evaluation such activities as self-initiative with new task – situations where effectively employees "craft their own roles" (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007, p. 344) to contribute to organization. This latter aspect is linked to our research question of the relation between clarity of duties and initiative. In conditions of high uncertainty proactive employees benefit from more loosely defined duties.

It has been shown on a sample of private enterprise workers that job autonomy

is positively associated with proactive behavior (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). That is in link with our hypothesis on the link between discretion and workplace initiative.

Another aspect of our study was related to attitude of employs to "benevolent rule-breaking". A type of organizational flexibility that occurs when employees are ready to bend the rules it allows to help the client or solve a problem and achieve the result. Morrison (2006, p. 5) terms this "pro-social rule breaking". The author showed that pro-social rule breaking was positively related to job autonomy (we call it "discretion") and risk-taking propensity as well as depended on co-worker behavior. We test these findings in our sample by linking discretion, rule-breaking attitudes and workplace initiative.

The role of workplace initiative must be more actively studied in the context of public sector organisation. We propose to approach this task be contrasting two influential theoretical traditions that both predict certain workplace behaviour: economic theories of bureaucracy and humanistic organisational psychology.

2.2 Conflicting theories of workplace behaviour

The section reviews and contrasts two set of theories relevant for explaining workplace initiative in bureaucracies. The fist set is the theories of self-interested bureaucrats, the include economic theories of bureaucracy by William Niskanen, Gordon Tullock and Anthony Downs (Downs, 1964; Niskanen, 1968; Tullock, 1965). Overall, bureaucrats in these theories are seen as self-interested and even selfish. The second set of theories is stemming from self-determination theory of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). These theories give contradicting predictions about the behavior of bureaucrats. According to the principal-agent theory greater discretion should lead to more deviation from the organizational goals. In contrast, according to self-determination theory, employees who are given freedom to decide what to do, will contribute more to the organization as they are driven by intrinsic motivation. The case of the civil service is distinct as public sector employment has been shown to be associated with Public Service Motivation. PSM can be viewed as a type of intrinsic motivation that is characteristic of the public sector workers. Additionally self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan envisages situations of crowding out – when intrinsic motivation is crowded out by external rewards (Frey & OberholzerGee, 1997; Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2011).

We use another classic theoretical distinction to structure this review. MacGregor's famous distinction between "Theory X" and "Theory Y" is relevant even today. According to MacGregor older theories (Theories X) saw employees as reluctant subjects who do not want to work and need to be given rewards and punishments in order to incentivise them. On the other hand "Theory Y" is a different view of

employees, they are seen as being intrinsically motivated, ready to work and contribute to the organisation. So they need to be given opportunity to realize their full potential and grow personally and professionally. Broadly speaking, economic theories of bureaucracy fall under the label Theory X, and psychological theories of self-determination - under the label Theory Y.

2.3 Economic theories of bureaucracy. Principal-agent theory

The economic theories of bureaucracy that emerged in the 1950-1960s takes as it starting point the assumption that people are self-interested and if they are not controlled they will deviate from the goals of organisation as much as is possible. The scope of this deviation is checked by organisational sanctions that limit the possibilities for slacking. It may be said that economic theory of bureaucracy remained within the realm of MacGregor's Theory X. Actors were seen as reluctant and needing control. It may be observed that this development is at least partly due to the methodology of economics as a sciences. The key assumption of economics is that people are 1) self-interested, 2) individual decision-makers, 3) rational. It is very problematic to use such methodology when speaking about group effects. Thus, the principle of methodological individualism largely predetermined the outlook of economic theories o bureaucracy. Below we briefly outline four key economic theories of bureaucracy and show how they tackle the subject of workplace initiative or omit it from their discussion.

2.3.1 Tullock's rational choice theory of bureaucracy [4]

Gordon Tullock is one one of the founders of the economic theory of bureaucracy, perhaps one of the purest representatives of it. This section illustrates how Tullock's theory of principal-agent relations has the explanatory power for studying the behaviour in bureaucratic hierarchies and particularly the study of workplace initiative.

In his model bureaucrats are reduced to mere "man units" (Tullock, 2005/1965, p.160). Such simplification allows him to abstract from individual personal qualities and motives that may guide bureaucrats in their action and concentrate on analysing superior-subordinate relationships in their pure form. He attempts to develop a general theory and discard "special conditions" (Tullock, 2005/1965, p.161). He concentrates on superior-subordinate relationship in the hierarchy and the theoretical efficiency of bureaucratic structures in terms of organisational size, amount of time devoted to useful work and degree of control exercised by the sovereign.

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[4]The section is partly adapted from (Kalgin & Klimenko, 2021; Kalgin, 2015).

2.3.1.1 Control in bureaucratic structures

> The less that A has to control the activities of a given subordinate, the more likely are the activities of the subordinate to deviate from A's desires (Tullock, 1965, p. 154)

Tullock views bureaucrats (and politicians) as self-interested individuals, who readily discard organisational objectives if it is conducive to attainment of their private benefits:

> If the general atmosphere of his organization requires actions contrary to the attainment of the objectives of the organisation in order to secure promotion, the politician can hardly be expected to choose a course of action detrimental to his own advancement (Tullock, 1965, p. 44).

This view would become the basis for future development of theories of bureaucracy, public choice and collective action as developed later by Niskanen, Downs, Olson and others. Tullock does not elaborate further in what respects bureaucrats' interests may be expected to differ from those of their superiors and the sovereign. This question was developed later by other theorists (primarily, Niskanen and Downs).

In relation to the question of workplace motivation this means that one must believe in benevolence of bureaucrats to provide them with greater discretion. The economic theory of bureaucracy generally takes the opposite view: bureaucrats are seen as selfish and working only because of carrots and sticks that are assigned to their jobs. These theories (namely, Anthony Downs's theory of bureaucratic personality types, and William Niskanen's theory of maximizing bureaucrats) may be classified as Theories X.

H1: Greater discretion is associated with lower workplace initiative.

2.3.2 Niskanen - Maximizing bureaucrat

William Niskanen's model of maximizing bureucrat is one of the most famous models of bureaucracy. According to Niskanen, the "utility function" of a bureaucrat is maximized via maximisation of the budget of the bureau. All other desirable aims such as security, prestige, income, power, are achieved in the bureaucratic world via maximisation of the budget (Niskanen, 1968). This is one of several pivotal economic theories of bureaucracy that rely on rational choice decision-making. In this model bureaucrats are self-interested and they satisfy all their desires via budget maximization. As in the case with Anthony Downs and Gordon Tullock, the overall character of this theory is markedly sceptical, or even cynical about motivations of bureaucrats. In this model there is little room for "organisational commitment", "identification" and "transformational leadership". Bureaucrats are seen

as self-interested rational individual decision-makers who want to minimize effort and maximise gains of their positions for themselves. According to this model we should also expect a negative link between discretion and workplace initiative (H1). A more nuanced view is presented by Anthony Downs in his seminal book "Inside Bureaucracy".

2.3.3 Downs' personality types of bureaucrats [5]

Downs emphasises that not all officials have the same goals and that their goals may differ from that of the organisation:

> In our theory, all large organizations are not teams, but coalitions. A team is a group of persons working together who have identical goals. A coalition is a group of persons working together who have some but not all goals in common. They need not give their common goals the same relative weight in their individual preference structures (Downs, 1967, p.76).

2.3.3.1 Biased behaviour of bureaucrats

The central concept in Downs' analysis of bureaucracy is the concept of "biased" behaviour. According to his theory, a bureaucrat's behaviour in his official role inevitably has a certain bias (Downs, 1967, p.77). An official's overall bias measures the difference between the way he actually performs his roles in the bureau and the way he would perform them if his goals were identical with the formal goals of the organization.

Downs views a bureaucratic organisation as a hierarchy of principal-agent relationships where goals of principals and agents differ. As a result, "every organization usually has formal goals different from the actual goals of any of its individual members" (Downs, 1967, p.77).

According to Downs, "organisational goals" emerge as a result of a compromise between its members:

> ... "organizational goals" do not arise because the organization has a real personality independent of its members, or any "collective life" of its own. Rather they result from compromises among some or all individual members, who agree to adopt a formal set of goals not identical with the personal goals of any one of them. Perhaps there is no formal consensus about such "collective goals"; they may even be established by the fiat of the highest-ranking member of the hierarchy (Downs, 1967, p. 77).

[The bureaucrat's] specific bias is always relative to some other particular official. It measures the difference between the way he actually performs his roles and the way he would perform them if his goals were identical with those of the

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other official concerned (usually his immediate superior or the topmost official in the bureau) (Downs, 1967, p. 77).

In addition to the overall bias, bureaucrats` behaviour may also be prone to specific bias that stems from differences in value systems and weighting of motives of individual bureaucrats. Downs identifies 2 types of motives that drive bureaucrats: self-interest motives and broader motives. Self-interest motives include 1) Power - inside the bureau or outside it; 2) Money income; 3) Prestige; 4) Convenience - minimizing personal effort; 5) Security - defined as a 'low probability of future losses of power, money income, prestige or convenience'. Broader motivations include 1) Personal loyalty - to the immediate work-group, bureau as a whole, the wider government, or the nation; 2) Identification with a specific programme of action or "mission-commitment"; 3) Pride in proficient performance of work; 4) Desire to serve 'the public interest' - that is, what the official believes the bureau should be doing to carry out its social function. (Dunleavy,1991, p.148-9).

Downs observes that "The "utility functions" of bureaucrats are made up of both self-interest and altruistic goals" (Downs, 1967, p. 85). He identifies five bureaucratic personality types: two "purely self-interested" and three "mixed-motive" types.

Purely self-interested officials are motivated almost entirely by goals that benefit themselves rather than their bureaus or society as a whole.

Climbers consider power, income, and prestige as nearly all-important in their value structures. *Conservers* consider convenience and security as nearly all-important. In contrast to climbers, conservers seek merely to retain the amount of power, income, and prestige they already have, rather than to maximize them.

Mixed-motive officials have goals that combine self-interest and altruistic loyalty to larger values. The main difference among the three types of mixed-motive officials is the breadth of the larger values to which they are loyal. Downs itenifies three types: *Zealots, Advocates and Statesmen* depending on the scope of their broader loyalties: to a set of "sacred policies", to the broader organisation and to society as a whole (Downs, 1967, p.88)

Problems that arise from the divergence of individual and organisational goals are not specific to public sector organisations, they exist in the private sector as well. However, in profit-making organisations profit may serve as an objective measure of performance and, thus, provides a way of detecting and limiting biases among employees. "But the equivalent limits in bureaus are far more obscure and uncertain" (Downs, 1967, p.78).

The the purposes of this study we take Downs's typology to predict different types of workplace initiative stemming from different personal motives. Thus, greater discretion given to a "Zealot" would result in different behavior than that given to

a "Conserver". Our scales include among other the questions on career orientation and we will try to use them to disentangle different responses to greater discretion.

In accordance with Downs's theory of bureaucratic personality types one needs to know the composition of different personalities in a bureau in order to predict the behavior of bureaucrats. Clearly one cannot directly assess one's bureaucratic personality" because a direct question would to sensitive. We, therefore attempted to test the link between clarity of organisational goals and workplace initiative. Different bureaucratic types would respond differently to clear goals, but we can nonetheless try to capture the overall effect.

> H2: Employees in organizations with clearer goals demonstrate greater initiative. (based on Downs, 1967 and (Kalgin, Podolskiy, Parfenteva, & Campbell, 2018);

2.4 Humanistic organisational psychology

Humanistic psychology appears in the 1950s with the works of Maslow (Maslow, 1970) ("Motivation and personality), it is further developed by McGregor (MacGregor, 1960) ("The human side of enterprise"). The focus of this stream of literature was on "turning to the human" and emphasizing positive motivations instead of negative ones.

Our focus of workplace initiative is in line with this classical tradition. We attempt to show that at the civil service, too, people demonstrate hight initiative if they are given a chance for it. It is a question for us of whether in the Russian context workplace initiative takes place as predicted by these theories.

2.4.1 Self-determination theory

Kalgin, Kalgina, and Lebedeva, 2019 provide a review of scholarship on intrinsic motivation as applied to the academic profession. They trace the development of self determination theory (SDT) in works of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). STD identifies three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Satisfaction of these basic needs contributes to human wellbeing (Gordeeva, 2010). They particularly emphasize the need for autonomy, "the satisfaction of this need is thwarted when an individual realizes that their activity is controlled from the outside" (Kalgin, Kalgina, & Lebedeva, 2019, p. 51).

The Self-Determination theory provides a framework for speaking about the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The authors further summarize the importance of intrinsic motivation.

> Intrinsic motivation energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action" (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999, p. 658). Conversely, "when people are rewarded for performing a task,

they do the job to gain the reward, but nothing above what is expected. In other words, an extrinsically motivated person tends to minimize their effort and maximize the reward (Deci & Ryan, 1985a, p. 77).

An action that is extrinsically motivated lacks the "fuel" of the pleasure of the activity itself. An intrinsically motivated action has an inherent value of its own (Kallio & Kallio, 2014).

The import for this study of workplace initiative is that extra-role behaviour, such as Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and workplace initiative are to be expected where the employees are able to realize their intrinsic motivation. If they are given autonomy, can demonstrate competence and experience psychological relatedness, we should expect them to show initiative and be overall more satisfied with their work and life.

H3: Greater freedom of discretion is associated with greater workplace initiative. (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 1985b);

H4: Greater freedom od discretion is associated with higher job satisfaction (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 1985b);

H5: In organizations where monetary rewards for extra-ordinary performance are in place, employees will demonstrate lower initiative (crowding out effect) (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 1985b; Frey & OberholzerGee, 1997; Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2011).

2.5   Public service motivation

Another relevant stream of literature is literature on the so called "public service motivation". A recent development in the studies on bureaucracy is the rise of the Public Service Motivation scholarship that sees civil servants as possessing a special kind of benevolent motivation that leads them to be ready for self-sacrifice and humility. According to Perry (the author of the PSM concept) PSM has been defined as "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions" (Perry, 1996).

Public service motivation (PSM) is a well developed construct. Two seminal papers by Perry and Wise have attracted a lot of scholarly attention and generated a burgeoning literature (Perry & Wise, 1990; Perry, 1996). Numerous studies have since been published that showed that answers on the PSM scale correlate significantly with may important job-related outcomes.

Recent experimental evidence suggests that PSM is associated with greater honest and altruism (Gans-Morse, Kalgin, Klimenko, Vorobyev, & Yakovlev, 2021; Gans-Morse, Kalgin, Klimenko, Vorobyev, & Yakovlev, 2020b, 2020a).

For our purposes it is important to mark that PSM may be categorized as a Theory Y type of motivation theory. People are seen as possessing certain eagerness to perform, develop, grow, contribute and create. PSM is the manifestation of this humanistic outlook in the field of public administration.

This stream of literature bears on the same three hypotheses as SDT presented earlier (H3, H4, H5)

2.6 Change-Oriented Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

A more narrow stream of literature is that is relevant to our discussion are the publications on one of the concepts that has recently got increased attention among public administration scholars, namely, the concept of Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (COOCB) (Campbell & Im, 2016; Campbell, 2018, 2015). It is closely related to other such concepts from organisational theory such as organisational commitment, identification, loyalty. The key idea here is that we can observe that some individuals are ready to contribute more to the organisation than is required by their formal work contracts. Some individuals are more likely to volunteer to do extra work or suggest an improvement to work processes. COOCB relates to situations when employees feel responsible for change at their workplace, they have a sense of belonging and ownership of their organisation even though that may not be stakeholders in any formal way. As these studies who, such an attitude is not unique to the private sector, it can also be observed among civil servants in public organisations. It is to this concept that we relate the notion of workplace initiative.

We attempt to test a hypothesis that the more flexible organisational duties are, the higher the workplace initiative will be. According to out model, civil servants who possess a certain desire for contributing to the organisation may do so more actively when their job descriptions an job requirements are looser. We call such activists "public entrepreneurs". They correspond to Zealots and Advocates of the typology of bureaucratic personalities by Downs.

> H6: Lower clarity of organizational duties is associated with greater initiative ("public entrepreneurs hypothesis").

2.7 Work-faith literature and weak Christianity

In this section we want to emphasise the role of cultural factors in workplace initiative. One of such factors that differentiates Russia from the Western World is the dominant religion. Religion has been found to predict important work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction. An important concept in this literature is "calling". One who is working according to one's calling has been shown to exhibit significant work-related outcomes such as greater satisfaction (Duffy, Bott, Allan, Torrey,

& Dik, 2012). Calling has been also discussed in the context of public organisations (Vandenabeele, 2008; Thompson & Christensen, 2018).

I Russian literature on the sociology of religion there has recently been interest in describing the phenomenon of "weak religiosity" among "non-practicing Christians" in Russia. According to national surveys about 65% of population in Russia identify as Orthodox Christians, yet only about 3% answer that they regularly attend the Euharist (Markin, 2017). This leaves a large gap between practising and non-practising Christians (Markin, 2018).

Zabaev (Zabaev, 2012; Zabaev & Prutskova, 2019) explores the difference in the ethical code of Protestantism and the Orthodox Christianity and finds that the pivotal role that is taken by the doctrine of calling in Protestantism is in the Orthodox Christianity taken by the concept of humility. Humility leads to salvation, not pursuit of one's calling. This has far-reaching consequence for work ethic and general socio-economic life. For our purposes it is important to stress that humility is seen as the central virtue in Orthodox Christianity and it may be negatively associated with initiative. One may not be inclined to come up with innovations and productive ideas because such behavior is not favoured by one's religion.

> H7: Religiosity is associated with lower workplace initiative (humility/calling hypothesis) (Zabaev, 2012; Zabaev & Prutskova, 2019).

2.8 Personal background and initiative

We want to explore both institutional and personal factors of workplace initiative. One such personal factor is geographical mobility and breath of work experience. We want to contrast civil servants who worked in the region their entire life from those who had experience in other regions. And we also differentiate between those who had experience in the private sector and those who always worked in government. The overarching hypothesis here is that those with experience of greater geographic mobility may exhibit higher workplace initiative, and similarly those with experience in the private sector are likely to demonstrate higher initiative. At the same time we are trying to capture those who have worked in the region for their entire career and to see if they also demonstrate positive workplace traits, such as initiative. These are the employees that have "roots" in the region and it is interesting for us to explore whether such "rooted" employees demonstrate positive workplace outcomes such as higher job satisfaction, lower turnover intention and greater initiative.

> H8: Employees with greater experience of cross-regional mobility will demonstrate higher initiative (effect of diversity of experience).

3   Research questions

We frame the research questions in the following way: Do civil servants in Russian regional government demonstrate workplace initiative when given greater discretion? What institutional and personal factors are associated with workplace initiative?

In answering these broad question we cover also the following subquestions:

1. what are the institutional and personal factors of workplace initiative;

2. are measures of initiative associated with job satisfaction

3. do subjective and objective measures of workplace initiative correlate;

4. is workplace initiative predicted by organisational factors such as material and immaterial rewards;

5. is workplace initiative predicted by cultural parameters such as religiosity.

4   Contributions to Existing Literature

We contribute to public administration literature by adding a broader description of the modern Russian public sector. We emphasize the importance of workplace initiative and explore factors influencing it. We outline the differences in the public service systems between Russia and well-studied countries in terms of cultural and institutional characteristics of the civil service.

5   Data Collection

Data have been collected using on-line survey (Qualtrics) in November 2021 in one of Russian regions. We collected 1860 responses. 75% of all regional and 88% of all municipal civil servants. This region has been chosen because it is broadly representative of the European regions of Russia, it has a slightly below-average GRP. The region had an advantage for access because of existing links with the governor. The governor supported the fieldwork. Thus we were able to achieve a nearly universal coverage. Response rate varied across organizations between 65% and 100%.

5.1   Country Selection

Russia is a relatively understudied country in terms of public administration research. Most of such non-Western countries researchers of public sector are concerned with the same type of questions and factors that are discussed by their colleagues on Western democracies. Notably, not many of such works explicitly

address the issue of different conditions of the countries that they study. Conse-quentially, more integration of country-specific features into the public service re-searches will be fruitful.

5.2 Sample

Sample includes regional and municipal civil servants. The following proce-dures have been used in sampling:

1. Invite links have been generated - a different link for each regional authority and each municipal district. This was done to avoid asking participants to indicate their organisation, thus limiting both risk of misleading answers and potential reluctance or hesitation on the part of participants and their privacy concerns;

2. Personnel managers of respective authorities distributed the link in their or-ganisation among the employees;

3. Participants took part in the on-line survey

4. Answers were recorded and stored at the researchers' server.

5.3 Administrative survey implementation

The survey was administered in that has recently been called the "administra-tive survey" way. On-line links were generated and sent to HR specialists in the tar-get public organisations. They were given an order from the governor to conduct the survey at their organisations. Two weekly reminders were sent to HR special-ists and then another reminder was sent to those organisations that demonstrated low response rate. Interestingly, several organisations demonstrated the response rate higher than 100

5.4 Questionnaire

In the survey we used two measures of workplace initiative:

- Subjective self-assessment of one's own initiative (Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, & Tag, 1997)

- A list of "objective" measures of initiative - concrete actions that one has done at the workplace (Rebzuev, 2009a)

6 The leading hypothesis and conceptualisation

The leading hypothesis in the study is that employees who have greater freedom of discretion and whose duties are less clear will demonstrate greater initiative. We

expect to find what we call "bureaucratic entrepreneurs": people who exhibit initiative on their own when they are not given exact instructions on what to do. Thus we are attempting to find evidence for the presence of self-determination among regional civil servants.

We conceptualize the "conditions for workplace initiative" as a combination of several variables: Freedom of discretion – (high); Clarity of duties (low); Extra rewards for extra-role behavior – (+/- if there is the crowding our effect).

7 Measurement

Two our instruments used different scales

- Subjective self-assessment initiative scale: 3 questions, 7-point Likert scale (Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, & Tag, 1997)

- A list of "objective" measures of initiative: 6 questions, 10-point scale from Never to Always (Rebzuev, 2009b)

Table 1 lists the questions used to measure workplace initiative.

The scale is adapted from Rebzuev (2009b). The components of extra-role behaviour will be analysed separately. THe "Overwork" component may be given different meaning in different contexts. In the context of public sector it is likely that Overwork is not motivated by one's self-determination to work more, but is demanded by one's superiors. We test this assumption.

7.1 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables are:

1. Subjective initiative self-assessment index - a sum of the tree questions. Min 0, Max 21.

2. Objective initiative actions index = sum of the 6 questions. 3 sub-indices: 1) improvement of work processes, 2) extra-work, 3) helping colleagues; each index is a sum of the two underlying questions.

7.2 Explanatory Variables

Explanatory variable and corresponding questions are given in Table 2 below.

7.3 Control Variables

We include the following control variables: Age, Gender, Born in the region, Number of subordinates, Experience in the public sector (years), Experience of working in another region, Nominal Religiosity

Table 1: Measures of initiative

Concept	Questions	Measure
Subjective self-assessment of initiative	Whenever there is a chance to get actively involved, I take it. Whenever I see that a colleague needs help, I offer it. Usually I do more than I am asked to do.	7-point Likert scale
"Objective" extra-role actions		
Innovative behavior	Make suggestions for changing the work process so that it can be done better or faster. Suggest to the management new methods and approaches to make the unit's activities more efficient.	10-point scale from Never to Always
Overwork	To come to work on weekends or perform work from home. Go to work in spite of feeling unwell	10-point scale from Never to Always
Helping others	Helping a colleague who has a lot of work to do. To advise colleagues on matters in which you are well versed.	10-point scale from Never to Always

Table 2: Explanatory variables

Concept	Question	Measure
Discretion.	Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the degree of decision-making freedom that is present in your work	10-point scale: 1 - In my work, I hardly ever make decisions on my own 10 - I make most decisions at work on my own
Clarity of goals, duties and responsibilities	I know exactly what the list of my responsibilities is. I know exactly what is expected of me as part of my job duties. I understand how my work relates to the goals of our organization.	7-point Likert scale from Completely agree to Completely disagree
In-role behaviour rewards	In your opinion, if an employee performs his or her duties conscientiously and well, how likely would a manager be to reward this employee in the following ways? • Tangible (monetary bonuses) • Non-tangible (verbal congratulations and commendations, letters of commendation, certificates of appreciation, certificates of merit)	7-point scale from most likely to not likely at all
Extra-role behaviour rewards	In your opinion, if an ordinary employee makes regular, meaningful contributions to the public body (local government body) over and above his/her regular duties, how likely would a manager be to reward this employee in the following ways? • Tangible (Monetary bonuses) • Non-tangible (verbal congratulations and letters of commendation from the superior, letters of commendation, certificates of appreciation, state awards) • Career (Appointment to a higher position)	7-point scale from most likely to not likely at all

8 Analysis

8.1 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses have be tested using OLS regressions.

Robustness Checks

We used a screener question to test for attentiveness. Inattentive observations may be expcluded from the sample and their answers may be compared with attentive ones to identify systematic biases.

We have included in our survey two measures of workplace initiative, this allows us to compare the answers between them.

8.2 Exploratory Analyses

We explore the effects of position (managers/specialists) and other control variables on dependent variables, specifically the effects of biographical and gender variables. We also compare regional and municipal civil servants in terms of variables of interest.

9 Results

We find that two of the three dimensions of workplace initiative (innovation and helping) are associated with higher job satisfaction, whereas overwork is negatively linked to job satisfaction. Generally, greater discretion is associated with greater initiative. This is in line with previous studies that showed a high level of Public service motivation among future civil servants: students willing to work in government (Gans-Morse, Kalgin, Klimenko, Vorobyev, & Yakovlev, 2020a). At the same time, we find that one of the dimensions of workplace motivation (overwork) is linked to lower clarity of job duties. This points to a subgroup of respondents who must unwillingly perform extra work. These are mostly females.

Our leading hypothesis is not confirmed. Less formalized duties are not associated with greater voluntary initiative, it is associated with Overwork (we term it "coercive extra-role behavior"). This hints at the fact that Weberian-type bureaucracy with clearly formalized duties would better protect lower level civil servants from coercion to over-work.

Below we present result of regression analysis for each hypothesis. It is important to highlight the differences between measures of initiative.

Below we report 4 models: (1) Self-assessment measure of initiative, (2) Innovative behavior at work, (3) Working overtime and while ill, (4) Helping others at work.

We expected different results fo different measures of initiative.

Table 3: Initiative and freedom of discretion. H1, H3.

	DV			
	Self-assessment (1)	Innovation (2)	Overwork (3)	Helping (4)
Discretion freedom	0,196*** (0,034)	0,25*** (0,029)	0,077** (0,03)	0,141*** (0,025)
Male	-0,11*** (0,244)	0,003 (0,202)	-0,107*** (0,215)	-0,078** (0,178)
Age	0,021*** (0,103)	-0,036 (0,085)	0,039 (0,091)	0,025 (0,075)
Born in the region (1/0)	-0,012 (0,2)	0,006 (0,165)	0,034 (0,176)	0,036 (0,146)
Exp. in other regions (1/0)	0,041 (0,18)	0,101*** (0,149)	-0,006 (0,159)	0,06* (0,131)
Exp. in government (years)	-0,022† (0,05)	0,064* (0,042)	0,039 (0,044)	0,075* (0,037)
Number of subordinates	0,116 (0,089)	0,242*** (0,074)	0,155*** (0,079)	0,132*** (0,065)
Religiousity (1/0)	-0,006*** (0,002)	-0,007 (0,002)	-0,003 (0,002)	0,004 (0,002)
N	1694	1694	1694	1694
R2	0,07	,179	,053	,072

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. † significant at $p < 0.1$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

Hypotheses 1 and 3. Initiative and discretion

Hypothesis 3 is confirmed (H1 is rejected), greater freedom of discretion is associated with higher initiative as measured by both subjective self-assessment and "objective" measures of proactive behaviour. (Table 3).

Hypotheses 2 and 6. Clarity of duties, goals, expectations

A section of the questionnaire was devoted to assessing organisational goal alignment, and clarity of duties and expectation. These questions are motivated by previous work on organisational goal alignment (Kalgin, Podolskiy, Parfenteva, & Campbell, 2018). We hypothesise that greater initiative will be associated with 1) higher goal alignment, 2) lower clarity of expectations, 3) lower clarity of duties. Here we assume that a model of "bureaucratic entrepreneurship" is valid. Employees with less rigidly defined duties and expectations are expected to contribute more to organisational in their extra-role activity. This hypothesis stems from Deci and Ryan (1985b) and literature on self-determination.

Table 4: Initiative, goal alignment, duties clarity, expectation clarity. H2 and H6.

	DV - initiative			
	Self-assessment	Innovative	Overwork	Helping
Goal alignment	0,139***	0,054	0,09*	0,054
	(0,121)	(0,103)	(0,108)	(0,089)
Clarity of expectations	0,051	0,013	-0,101**	-0,037
	(0,103)	(0,088)	(0,092)	(0,076)
Clarity of duties	0,029	0,025	0,026	0,083*
	(0,113)	(0,097)	(0,101)	(0,083)
Gender	-0,089***	0,002	-0,109***	-0,078**
	(0,248)	(0,212)	(0,221)	(0,182)
Number of subordinates	0,15***	0,301***	0,173***	0,166***
		(0,076)	(0,079)	(0,065)
Exp. in other regions	0,041†	0,105***		0,057*
	(0,183)	(0,156)		(0,134)
Exp. in government		0,07*		0,07*
		(0,076)		(0,065)
Age			0,062*	
			(0,093)	
Born in the region				0,049†
				(0,148)
N	1600	1600	1600	1600
R2	,076	,131	,056	,065

Controls: Age, Gender, Born in the region, Experience in government, Has experience in other regions, Number of subordinates, Religiosity. Only significant coefficients reported for controls

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. † significant at $p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

The results, however suggest, that clarity of expectations is negatively associated with Overwork component of the initiative measure. This indicates that employees with less clear expectations tend to overwork more. When this is seen in the light of the findings on the negative link between Overwork and Job satisfaction (H4 below), we can state that our hypothetical model of "bureaucratic entrepreneurship" does not seem to hold. The explanation that we propose here is that people with less clear job expectations tend to be influenced to work longer hours and come to work while ill. At the same time however, there is a weak ling with goal alignment, which suggests that either 1) our model might be applicable to a subgroup of employees who overwork because they are committed to the organisation or that 2) organisational goals are used to make people work overtime even though they are unwilling to do it. Overwork is associated with the female gender.

These findings speak in favour of the validity of principal-agent theories - they continue to have an important explanatory potential when it comes to workplace initiative and its institutional factors.

Hypothesis 4. Initiative and job satisfaction

According to the theory o self-determination, greater freedom of discretion should be associated with higher job satisfaction, because it allows to meet higher needs of growth and competence. Here we see that our measure of Overwork is negatively associated with job satisfaction. (Table 5) Although it is a measure of proactive behaviour in our operationalization, we have to highlight here that initiative may be "coercive". People who come to work over time do not necessarily do it on out of their own will. We thus indicate here a significant group of respondents who do not fit the traditional proactive image of proactivity studies. These people are coerced to work more and are not satisfied with it. We explore this in further analysis.

Gender effects

In all regressions we used gender as one of the control variables. Women appear to score lower on self-assessment of initiative, perhaps due to the culture of modesty. At the same time we see that Overwork is negatively linked to the gender variable meaning that women tent to overwork more. Female respondents scored higher on the Helping component of the initiative measure (The coefficient is negative, meaning that it is associated with the female gender, coded 0).

Table 5: Initiative and job satisfaction. H4.

	DV - job satisfaction
Innovation	0,094***
	(0,013)
Overwork	-0,113***
	(0,013)
Helping others	0,144***
	(0,017)
Number of subordinates	0,093***
	(0,04)
N	1695
R2	,054

Controls: Age, Gender, Born in the region, Has experience in other regions, Number of subordinates, Religiosity. Only significant coefficients reported for controld

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. † significant at $p < 0.1$, $^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Hypothesis 5. Rewards and initiative

We assessed the link between rewards for proactivity and our measures of initiative. According to crowding out hypothesis we expected to find negative correlation between material rewards and initiative and positive link between non-material rewards and proactivity. The latter of the two predictions has been confirmed. We find that non-material rewards for extra-role behaviour are associated with higher measures of initiative (Table 6).

It should be noted that the likelihood of material and career rewards was not related to greater initiative. This raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of stimulation policy used in the government departments. We call this "the dysfunction of stimuli": the current scheme of stimuli does not seem to induce greater initiative.

Hypothesis 7. Religiosity and workplace initiative

In model (1) (Table 3) nominal religiosity is negatively associated with self-assessment measure of initiative. This may indicate that religious people are more modest when it comes to assessing themselves on the initiative scale. We interpret this as a manifestation of humility which is core to the Orthodox ethics (Zabaev, 2012). Nominal religiosity is not, however, linked to any of the three "objective" measures of initiative behaviour. Apart from nominal religiosity we also tested attendance of religious services as an explanatory variable. However, it has not demonstrated any significant links with workplace initiative.

Table 6: Rewards for proactive behavior and initiative. H5.

	Self-assessment	DV - initiative Innovative	Overwork	Helping
Material Rewards	0,028	0,045	-0,035	-0,051
	(0,057)	(0,048)	(0,05)	(0,042)
Non-material Rewards	0,152***	0,063*	0,049	0,081*
	(0,056)	(0,048)	(0,05)	(0,041)
Career Rewards	0,038	-0,041	-0,033	0
	(0,06)	(0,051)	(0,053)	(0,044)
N	1638	1638	1638	1638
R2	,077	,129	,049	,059

Controls: Age, Gender, Born in the region, Experience in government, Has experience in other regions, Number of subordinates, Religiosity.

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. † significant at $p < 0.1$, $^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Hypothesis 8. Interregional mobility and initiative.

Table 3 and Table 4 demonstrate a positive link between Experience in other regions and Innovative component of the initiative measure. This confirms Hypothesis 8. Having experience in other regions is associated with higher scores on the innovative behaviour dimension of our measure. We assume that people who worked in another region may be able to bring different practices into the organisation.

10 Discussion

10.1 Workplace initiative and administrative values [6]

This section attempts to locate the place of workplace initiative studies in a wider context of public administration literature. Hood (1991) introduces a concept of "administrative values" and differentiates it from "political values":

> "Administrative values... relate to conventional and relatively narrow ideas about 'good administration' rather than to broader ideas about the proper role of the state in society" (Hood, 1991:10). The same administrative system may cater for changing sets of political values. For example, "equity values could perfectly well be programmed into the target-setting and performance indication process, if there was strong enough political pressure to do so" (Hood, 1991:10).

Hood (1991:10) identifies three "families" or "clusters" of administrative values: sigma, theta and lambda: "[b]roadly, the 'sigma' family of values relates to economy and parsimony, the 'theta' family relates to honesty and fairness, and the 'lambda'

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[6]This section is adapted from (Kalgin, 2014; Kalgin, 2015)

family relates to security and resilience". Emphasizing different types of values leads to differences in the focus of policy design and implementation:

Lambda-type values. "If lambda-type values are placed at centre stage, the central concern is to avoid system failure, 'down time', paralysis in the face of threat or challenge. Classic expressions of lambda-type values include: redundancy, the maintenance of back-up systems to duplicate normal capacity; diversity, the maintenance of quite separate, self-standing units; robustness, use of greater amounts of materials than would ordinarily be necessary for the job" (Hood, 1991:14).

Theta-type values. "[If] theta-type values are placed at centre stage, the central concern is to ensure honesty, prevent 'capture' of public bodies by unrepresentative groups, and avoid all arbitrary proceedings. Classic initiatives promoting theta-values include: recall systems for removing public officials from office by popular vote; 'notice and comment' and 'hard look' requirements in administrative law; independent anti-corruption investigatory bodies, freedom of information laws, extensive public reporting requirements" (Hood, 1991:13). Hood remarks that "where honesty and fairness is a primary goal, the design-focus is likely to be on process-controls rather than output controls", "'Getting the job done' in terms of aggregate quantities is likely to be supplemented by concerns about how the job is done... concern with process may cause the emphasis to go on the achievement of maximum transparency in public operations" (Hood, 1991:13).

Sigma-type values. "[if] sigma-type values are emphasized, the central concern is to 'trim fat' and avoid 'slack'". Typical examples of initiative promoting sigma-type values are: "'just in time' inventory control systems, payment-by-results reward systems and administrative 'cost engineering'" (Hood, 1991:12).

As we see, initiative is not readily mentioned among the three administrative values. It does not easily fit within the traditional principal-agent framework of government that sees civil servants as reluctant actors that who do not want to perform they duties and need to be forever reminded of their jobs. In essence, Hood's typology does not incorporate the agency of the civil servants and does not acknowledge them as rightful co-workers in the process of the delivery of public services. Initiative is not given consideration in this model.

However, it can be connected with all three clusters of values, initiative and proactive behaviour can help achieve the targets of all the three clusters: to ensure resilience, fairness and economy. Our findings suggest that among Russian civil servants proactivity plays a significant role and that it is an important resource that may be tapped into by public organisations. At the same time we observe that in some cases top-down coercive management takes place and employees have to overwork not because of their inner inclinations but due to excessive demands of the workplace.

11   Conclusion and Future Research

We find that self-determination theory is successfully predicting workplace initiative in the context of Russian civil service. This calls for an optimistic assessment of the workforce of Russian regional government. At the same time we highlight the existence of "coercive" extra-role behaviour. Some employees have unclear job expectations that result in overwork and lower satisfaction. These employees demonstrate extra-role behaviour not because of their self-determination, but because they are required to do so. This phenomenon should be studied more carefully. Here we only highlight that women seem to report such conditions more frequently. The paper contributes to scholarship of the public sector in Russia and attempts to use major theories from organisational psychology and organisational theory to describe the world of the Russian civil service. Future research would benefit from a cross-regional comparison of the factors of initiative that we identify here. These factors also could be studied qualitatively through interviews and participant observation.

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12 Appendix. Russian version of the questionnaire

Question were formulated in the following way:

Subjective self-assestment

1. Когда появляется возможность проявить себя, я стараюсь её использовать.

2. Когда я вижу, что кому-то из коллег требуется помощь, я её предлагаю.

3. Часто я делаю больше, чем требуют.

"Objective" extra-role actions

1. Вносить предложения по изменению рабочего процесса, чтобы он мог выполняться лучше или быстрее.

2. Предлагать руководству новые методы и подходы, позволяющие сделать деятельность подразделения более эффективной.

3. Приходить на работу в выходные дни или выполнять ее на дому.

4. Выходить на работу, несмотря на плохое самочувствие

5. Помогать коллеге, у которого очень много работы.

6. Консультировать коллег по вопросам, в которых Вы хорошо разбираетесь.

Four reaction options: from 1 Least likely to 10 Most likely

1. Я скажу новому сотруднику, что смогу ответить на его вопросы после окончания рабочего дня

2. Я открыто скажу, что не могу заботиться о новом сотруднике.

3. Я буду отправлять нового сотрудника к моим коллегам, когда у него будут возникать вопросы.

4. Я постараюсь справиться с ситуацией, и сохранять спокойствие, отвечая на вопросы нового сотрудника.

Discretion

Пожалуйста, на шкале от 1 до 10 оцените степень свободы в принятии решений, которая присутствует в Вашей работе

1 - В своей работе я почти не принимаю самостоятельных решений

10 - Большинство решений на работе я принимаю самостоятельно

Clarity of goals, duties and expectations

1. Я точно знаю перечень моих должностных обязанностей.

2. Я точно знаю, чего от меня ожидают в рамках исполнения моих должностных обязанностей.

3. Я понимаю, как моя деятельность связана с целями нашей организации.

Clarity of incentives

Scale from 1 - least agree, to 7 - completely agree

В нашем органе государственного управления (ОМСУ) все сотрудники точно знают, какие действия поощряются

Goal-oriented rule-breaking

По Вашему мнению, какое из приведенных ниже утверждений больше описывает российскую государственную службу

1 - Важно точно следовать принятым правилам и процедурам

10 - Важно достигать необходимых результатов, даже если это требует выхода за рамки существующих правил и процедур

Satisfaction

1. Я, в целом, удовлетворен(а) своей профессиональной деятельностью

2. Я, в целом, удовлетворен(а) своей жизнью

Rewards

- Поощрения за внутри-ролевое поведение
  Как вам кажется, если служащий добросовестно и качественно выполняет свои обязанности, насколько вероятно, что руководитель поощрит этого сотрудника в следующих формах: (Шкала от 1 до 7)

  1. Материальные (Денежные премии)
  2. Нематериальные (Устные поздравления и благодарности руководителя, благодарственные письма, благодарности, грамоты)

- Поощрения за экстра-ролевое поведение
  Как вам кажется, если рядовой сотрудник регулярно вносит значимый вклад в работу госоргана (ОМСУ) сверх своих текущих обязанностей, насколько вероятно, что руководитель поощрит этого сотрудника в следующих формах: (Шкала от 1 до 7)

  1. Материальные (Денежные премии)

2. Нематериальные (Устные поздравления и благодарности руководителя, благодарственные письма, благодарности, грамоты, государственные награды)
3. Карьерные (Назначение на вышестоящую должность)

Contact details and disclaimer

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