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BUREAUCRACY REFORM: THE VIEWPOINT OF RUSSIAN POLITICAL LEADERS

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Summary: The article examines the question of how integrated the Civil Service reform program is in political discourse, and how the content of these programs depends on political changes. The statements about the Civil Service reform by Russian leaders have been studied in a wide time range from 1916 to 2016. The author had formed large empirical data to have the opportunity to use statistical methods. It was found that most of the statements related to Civil Service reforms chronologically coincide with the periods of social and political instability. The leaders of polar political orientation have voiced textually and substantially similar theses on the bureaucracy reform. All of them can be reduced to a few key themes. The politicians of different generations and political views have statements similar in form and content to each of these themes. For instance, every leader, communist or democrat, voiced the idea about the need for a gradual displacement of bureaucracy structures by the civil society institutions. The most quoted issue was about the public authorities efficiency and about the personnel management. The statements about the Civil Service interaction with society, as well as about corruption and Civil Service relationship with politicians were rarely stated. More or less often were discussed the questions regarding payment system and number of civil servants. Our hypothesis was proved to be right that the general direction of the Civil Service reform is experiencing relatively weak influence from political situation because institutional characteristics of the Civil Service are relatively stable. The statements from politicians about bureaucracy are strongly connected with political cycles and their main purpose is to criticize the previous leader. The promises to reduce bureaucracy, make political system cheaper and closer to people are an important element in pre-election rhetoric of political leaders, which attracts the support of voters to them.

Keywords: bureaucracy, civil service, political leadership, political regimes, the elite, reform effectiveness

БЮРОКРАТИЧЕСКАЯ РЕФОРМА: С ТОЧКИ ЗРЕНИЯ РОССИЙСКИХ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ЛИДЕРОВ

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Аннотация: В статье рассматривается вопрос о том, как интегрировать программу реформы государственной службы в политический дискурс и как содержание данных программ зависит от политических изменений. Изучены заявления о реформе государственной службы со стороны российских лидеров во временном диапазоне с 1916 по 2016 год. Автор сформировал обширные эмпирические данные с целью получения возможности использовать статистические методы. Было установлено, что большинство заявлений, касающихся реформ государственной службы, хронологически затрагивают периоды социальной и политической нестабильности. Руководителями полярно противоположных политических направлений были выражены буквально и по существу подобные тезисы о реформе бюрократии. Все они могут быть сведены к нескольким ключевым темам. Политические деятели разных поколений, а также политические взгляды, имеют сходные по форме и содержанию заявления по каждой из данных тем. К примеру, каждый лидер, будь то коммунист или демократ, высказывал идею о необходимости постепенного замещения структур бюрократии институтами гражданского общества. Наиболее часто цитируемый вопрос касался эффективности государственных органов и управления персоналом. Заявления о взаимодействии государственной службы с обществом, а также о коррупции и взаимоотношениях государственной службы с политиками указывались редко. Чаще всего обсуждались вопросы об оплате и о числе государственных служащих. Наша гипотеза была подтверждена о том, что общее направление реформы государственной службы испытывает относительно слабое влияние политической ситуации, поскольку институциональные характеристики гражданской службы относительно стабильны. Заявления политиков о бюрократии тесно связаны с политическими циклами и служат главным образом для критики предыдущего лидера. Обещания снизить бюрократию, сократить затраты и стать ближе к народу являются важным элементом предвыборной риторики политических лиц, привлекающей к себе поддержку избирателей.

Ключевые слова: бюрократия, государственная служба, политическое лидерство, политические режимы, элита, эффективность реформ

Introduction

Public Service reform is one of the key structural reforms. Criticism towards bureaucracy and calls to increase its effectiveness are included in the arsenal of almost any political force in the course of struggle for power and its retention. These reforms can be carried out in isolation, as well as be built into the broad agenda of various socio-political changes.

At present, Russia is implementing a narrow program to develop the Civil Service, planned until the end of the current presidential cycle in 2018. At the same time, in the draft strategy for the country's development until 2024, prepared by the German Gref's[1] Center for Strategic Research, the transformation of bureaucracy is planned as part of a broad administrative reform, which the President of Russia must lead personally. This is not only a continuation for country's tradition of «manual» management, but also recognition of this direction's priority for political leaders.

The purpose of this article is to find out how Public Service reform programs are embedded into political discourse and how the content of these programs depends on political changes in society.

To achieve this goal, three key objectives are being solved:

1) We propose the methodology to study the statements of political leaders on public service issues;

2) Then we collect an empirical data to study these statements in a broad time horizon;

3) We obtain and interpret the results while taking into account the global political agenda.

The methodology of this study is based on an analysis of interpretations of the role and functions of the Civil Service at various stages of the reform in official sources. Analysis of interpretations as a method is connected with the philosophical schools of phenomenology, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism. This method captures the political class reflection on Public Service as a social phenomenon in the general context of society transformation. The method tends to subjectivism in view of the fact that understanding and interpreting texts depends on the researcher's position. In order to increase objectivity, the study was carried out on a large array of empirical data using the mathematical statistics apparatus. The analytical program of research is based on the text, the analysis of arguments and differences in the discourse (vocabulary and arguments) of analyzed texts in relation to different time periods.

The results are intended to broaden the range of theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of politics and to promote more substantiated judgments about the interrelationship of political and administrative processes in recent history.

1 Former Russian minister of economy.

Factors of bureaucratic reforms' political priority

The specifics of the Civil Service explain the place that this institution occupies in the system of relations between government and society. Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson noted the special nature of interaction between political and administrative categories at the end of the 19th century. Attempts to transfer the principles of corporate management to the state machinery, according to the concept of managerialism and the famous concept of New Public Management, contributed to weakening of control over bureaucracy by civil society, especially in countries of political transit.

In modern studies, the main direction is the study of involvement of social groups in implementing functions previously inherent in the bureaucracy. This is described by the concept of Good Governance.

The problems of the Civil Service have long and firmly entered the orbit of political studies, since it is included in political management as a mechanism of political power. Non-political, at first glance, processes of technological management, acquire political content when they affect the interests of large social groups. At the same time, the State Service executes political decisions, but also actively participates in their development, carries out interpretation of laws, realizes its group interests and serves as a mediator between society and the authorities.

Summarizing all of the above, we can define the institution of public service as a:

- Political phenomenon, connected to existing political regime,
- Hierarchical set of social statuses and official positions,
- Set of powers, legal norms and functions for their implementation,
- Personnel staff with group values,
- Mechanism of interaction with various groups of influence.

The universal character of these institutional characteristics is applicable, in our opinion, to a country with any political system and at every stage of economic development. The Institute of the Civil Service is designed to meet the public need to ensure the implementation of public policy and the daily contact of society with the institutions of political power. In this duality of tasks can be seen Talcott Parsons's classical view of state's two functions in modern society, which are, first, to realize public interests and, second, to maintain the integrity of society.

Deep stratification, involving internal partitions, allows the Civil Service to effectively resist external changes. Self-organization and informal norms, as Michel Crozier points out, are successfully combined there with formal management structures. From this follows the need to take into account the interests of bureaucracy in attempts to reform it, since otherwise its organizational and imperious resource will be directed not at realizing the changes, but at resisting them, which can have ambiguous political consequences.

Thus, the Civil Service institution has a decisive influence on the results of political agenda implementation,

since bureaucracy rules all sectors and spheres of state administration and under any political regime. The political elite is compelled to reckon with the interests of bureaucracy, capable of blocking any reforms. At the same time, politicians are in a more vulnerable position, because they have to answer to the society for failures in management. Public criticism of bureaucracy by political leaders has as its goal both to mobilize the bureaucracy and to shift the blame for failing to achieve the results to the public. At the same time, a decrease in public confidence in the institution of Public Service entails a drop in the legitimacy of authorities as a whole.

By initiating the reforms of the Civil Service, the leaders try, on the one hand, to increase the dependence of bureaucracy on their political will, and, on the other hand, to ensure the professionalism of the apparatus. These tasks, by and large, are mutually exclusive: a weak and politically dependent bureaucracy is not able to effectively implement the government's course, it is unstable and corrupt, but impartial and career-oriented officials are too influential and dangerous for elected leaders. This provision explains the contradictions of numerous attempts to transform the state apparatus, examples of which are given by the recent history of all the states.

Hypothesis, methodology and empirical data

The hypothesis of this study is that there are relatively weak influences of political conjuncture on a general vector of Civil Service reforms, since the functions and institutional characteristics of the Civil Service are highly stable. This aspect of the problem has so far attracted the attention of few researchers, despite the presence of a huge layer of work on various stages of bureaucratic reform. In Russia we know only a few attempts to investigate the relationship between the frequency and the tonality of recalls about Public Service in regional mass media and the electoral cycles at the regional level (Vasilyeva, 2015).

Methodologically, the article by Thomas Elston (2014) is interesting. In it the author with comparative data proves how the same concepts used by politicians in the course of Civil Service reforms in the UK have changed over time. If in the 1980s efficiency, decentralization and deregulation were put on as synonyms, then in 2010s efficiency was associated, on the contrary, with centralization and strengthening of state control. Although the political vocabulary uses the same concepts as before, they are filled with fundamentally different content.

Russian scholar Tatiana Andryukhina (2015) points out the repeatability of semantic models in political discourse. In the speeches of politicians from one national community there are cases of coincidence of metaphorical models, ensuring the constancy of associations between conceptual domains and their understanding by audiences. These findings correlate with the results of our study, reinforcing the theoretical constructs used.

To test the hypothesis, statements from the country leaders on Public Service issues have been studied. Although such statements sound constantly, however, they have not been systematically studied in the framework of political studies, as far as we know.

The problem here mainly consists of changes in the legal content of the Civil Service notion in different periods of history. In the Russian Empire a large class of «officials» is described by classics of literature (Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov), but no sociological and political study of this layer was conducted.

After the Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks strove to realize the postulate of the Marxist theory about withering away of the state under socialism. However, the conditions of the Civil War required mobilizing the economy, which, in turn, determined the preservation of the professional state apparatus. Legislation on Public Service in the USSR was not adopted, and workers of ministries and departments were legally ordinary employees. The exception was the so-called nomenclature - a small group of the top senior positions, the appointment of which was carried out directly by the political leadership.

The Institute of Professional Civil Service in the present Russia was not formed immediately, but only after the adoption of the 1993 Constitution. The first law on it was adopted in mid-1995 and updated in 2003. According to these acts, the Civil Service is understood as the activity to ensure fulfillment of the powers of government bodies and top senior officials.

Despite these legal differences, the Civil Service as an institution existed throughout history and fulfilled the functions of implementing state policy. It was the commonality of functions that served as a criterion for the selection of material on the theme under study.

State service was the object of attention for political leadership in every period of history. In their speeches, the country's leaders criticized it, set tasks for it, and determined directions to change it. The survey required studying the statements of leading politicians about bureaucracy. Such a study is significant in a wide time range, because it allows us to collect a voluminous empirical data, and apply statistical methods of data processing. The study was carried out in the horizon of a hundred years - from 1916 to 2016. It covers the period from the fall of the autocracy and the formation of the Soviet statehood in Russia until the transition to democracy and its development up to the present time.

As leaders of the state we take into account in relevant periods the following persons:

- The emperor (till November 1917),
- Leaders of opposing forces during the Civil War (1918-1920),
- Politburo members of the Communist Party Central Committee (1920-1991),
- The Russian president (1991-2016),
- The chairmen of government, or the prime-minister (over the whole period of study),
- The chairmen of the Congresses of Soviets (1917-1936) and Supreme Council (1937-1993),
- The chairmen of the State Duma, or parliament (1917, 1994-2016).

Our main sources were public speeches of the said leaders: manifestos; speeches; speeches at State Duma meetings, at congresses of Soviets, at sessions of the Supreme Council, at Communist Party congresses and Plenums of its Central Committee; and the President's annual Addresses to the Federal Assembly.

These sources are chosen because of their programmatic nature, regularity, accessibility and official nature. Sources such as interviews, memoirs, and articles were used in a limited amount. All sources are published and open now.

Contextual search was carried out according to the words: *public service, public employees, public management, administrative bodies, bureaucracy, and official*. In addition, the term *corruption* was controlled as it was logically connected with the issues under study. This approach allowed removing the legal differences in approaches to Civil Service on the horizon of the study.

As units of analysis, logically completed fragments of statements containing criticism towards bureaucracy or proposals for its optimization were used. The empirical data formed in this way is structured according to the content of the statements, as well as their authors, years, sources, and subjects. When categorizing citations on topics, we proceeded from the following main problems:

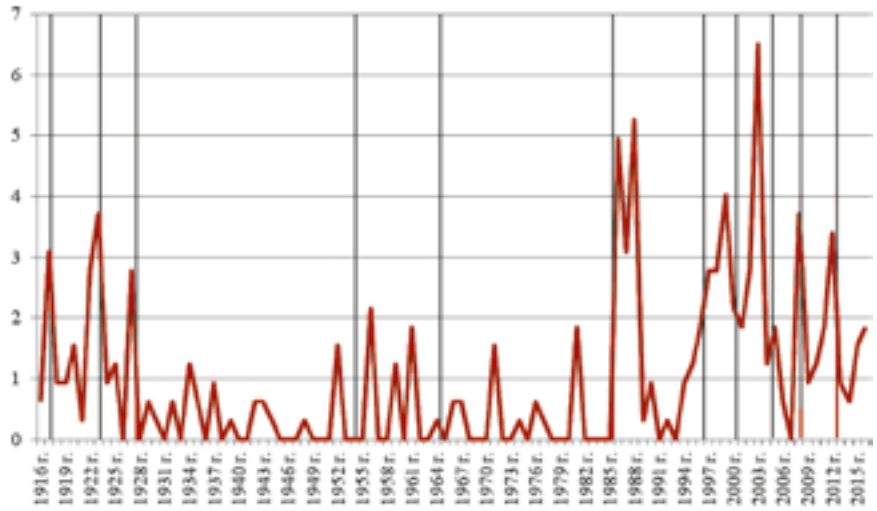
- The ratio of Civil Service and politics (independence / dependence of the Civil Service on the parliament, parties, leaders);
- Relations of Civil Service with society (democracy, openness, equal access of citizens to Civil Service);
- Number of staff (optimal number and reduction);
- Payment system of civil servants (financing, high cost of the state apparatus, bureaucratic costs);
- Corruption (bribery, abuse of power);
- Personnel work in the Civil Service (selection, rotation, updates, promotion, reserve, rejuvenation of personnel);
- Efficiency (effectiveness, evaluation, orientation for the result).

We detailed quotes by groups, which allowed to conduct their in-depth substantive analysis. The task was to find out exactly which bureaucracy-related problems attracted attention of leaders in each period of time. Further, it was analyzed how these statements corresponded with real changes in order to determine whether the statements contained a thoughtful political program or only criticism on duty at the address of apparatus.

Semantic analysis of the texts made it possible to compare the content of speeches on one topic in different political conditions. As a result, we have formed an idea of the extent to which the vector of Civil Service reform is under the influence from the political conjuncture.

Figure 1. Distribution of statements about bureaucracy by years (per cent)

Note: compiled by the author on the basis of own research. Sample size n=322.



Interpretation of results

We revealed in the sources more than 320 statements from political leaders on the issues studied in the chronological framework of the research.

The last Russian Emperor Nicholas II owns only 1% of these quotations, since the survey covers only the last two years of his long twenty-three-year reign. Soviet leaders spoke on the problems of bureaucracy more often. Vladimir Lenin owns 10% of the statements. Joseph Stalin is the author of 16% of them. As a rule in their speeches the bureaucracy issues were linked to the general context of the current policy.

Nikita Khrushchev owns 5% of quotations; Leonid Brezhnev is the author of 6%; Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko did not make any statements on this issue in the short period of their leadership, but Mikhail Gorbachev during his policy of *glasnost*, often criticized the Soviet bureaucracy and made proposals for its improvement. He owns 12% of the quotations analyzed.

The first president of Russia Boris Yeltsin in 1994 introduced the practice of the annual Presidential Addresses to the Federal Assembly, in each of which he paid attention to problems of effectiveness of the state power. He is the author of 13% of statements about the Civil Service.

His successor Vladimir Putin spoke on a wide range of state administration issues, both in his Addresses and in press conferences. He is the author of 20% of all the statements about bureaucracy. Dmitri Medvedev both at posts of president and prime minister paid special attention to corruption problems. In addition, he made a number of statements on the legislation of Civil Service, as he over-

saw the issue earlier in the presidential administration. In general, he owns 13% of the statements.

The heads of the legislative branch and the government are the authors of 5% of the citations analyzed. Thus, Putin, Stalin, Yeltsin, Medvedev, and Gorbachev have generated three quarters of all statements about bureaucracy in the past 100 years. At the same time, there is no apparent shift of the sample to any one person, which indicates a correct selection of the initial data.

The distribution of all analyzed material in chronological order is shown on Figure 1. It draws attention to the fact that the peak values of references to Civil Service in the country's leaders' speeches basically coincide with political cycles.

The first peak occurred in 1917, when the destruction of the old bureaucracy system was perceived by revolutionaries as a way to undermine the support of the current government. The next peak belongs to 1923, when at the 12th Congress of the Communist Party the struggle for the "heritage" of retired Lenin had started between different party groups. During this period Stalin formed his loyal management, which provided him with victory in this struggle.

The third peak dates back to 1927, when the "united opposition" by Leo Trotsky was defeated at the 15th Party Congress, and a course was taken to collectivize the village. At that time, it was required to create the state apparatus adequate to new tasks of state in the economy, which was given a great political significance.

In subsequent years, the apparatus consistently fulfilled the guidelines of the political leadership, as a result of which public attention to it was reduced. Only in 1952 at the 19th Congress of the CPSU there were changes in the management system. Later at three Party Congresses in 1956, 1959 and 1961 during the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev the liquidation of sector ministries and other major changes in the management system has put on the agenda the changes in the Civil Service system, which were necessary corresponding political statements.

Stabilization of the political course after the election of Leonid Brezhnev as a head of the Party was expressed in lowering public attention to bureaucracy. Revival of it refers to the 26th Congress of the CPSU in 1981, which prepared the basis for the policy of acceleration (*uskorenie*). And since 1985, there has been an abrupt increase of political discussion as the radical changes of *perestroika* began. Gorbachev's criticism of the state apparatus received the character of the political campaign for the radical change of managerial staff.

It is interesting that by the end of *perestroika* attention to this topic was coming to naught. The new leadership of the country in 1991-1994 almost completely left the Civil Service out of its attention. This is strange because Boris Yeltsin before being elected as a president in 1991 made his career on criticizing the privileges of the party nomenclature. Growth of attention to the topic was noted only in the mid-1990s, when the law "On the Basics of the Civil Service" was being prepared (1995). In the election campaign of 1996 and later the bureaucracy problems were constantly present in the presidential speeches.

Later there was an increase in the number of references to Civil Service, especially in the years preceding presidential elections: 2003, 2007 and 2011. The gradual unfolding of the 2018 pre-election race is also accompanied, as can be seen, by the intensification of speeches on this issue.

We interpret this trend in such a way that the Civil Service problems are probably of interest to political leaders not by themselves, but in the general context of the elite's struggle. On the one hand, the ineffectiveness of bureaucracy serves as a win-win trick for criticizing the previous leadership. Lenin criticized the cruel tsarist bureaucracy, later Khrushchev attacked the Stalinist apparatus, after that Gorbachev was severe upon Brezhnev's cadre "stagnation" and Yeltsin damned the Soviet "partocrats". Putin scolded the oligarch-dependent Public Service of the 1990s. On the other hand, the promises to reduce staff and costs of bureaucracy, and bring the government apparatus closer to people are part of the pre-election rhetoric that attracts the voters.

The meaningful analysis of the subject of statements suggested that they should be divided into criticism and proposals. One hundred critical statements accounts in ratio with more than 220 proposals.

Nicholas' II speeches had a positive agenda: in one case he addressed the deputies, and in the second case he appealed to the army to remain faithful to his duty and oath. Lenin's 84% of quotations were the proposals. Unlike other leaders, he wrote a number of works specifically devoted to this issue (*The State and the Revolution, 1917, How to Reorganize the Worker's Inspection, 1923, Less is Better, 1923*). In them he detailed the program of building the state apparatus on democratic principles.

The texts of Stalin contain 71% of the proposals, which means he used criticism more often than Lenin. Khrushchev made proposals in 88% of his speeches about bureaucracy, Brezhnev have done it in 60% of cases, and Gorbachev in 71% of cases. Yeltsin's only 54% of speeches about bureaucracy had a positive program of change, also 65% quotations by Putin, 72% by Medvedev, and 53% by the remaining leaders.

Thus, the highest share of proposals, as it turned out, was contained in the texts and speeches of Khrushchev and Lenin. At the same time, we did not evaluate the quality and feasibility of these proposals. The main critics of the bureaucracy were Yeltsin and Brezhnev. Heads of legislative bodies and the government more often criticized the apparatus than gave concrete proposals. These are interesting and unusual results, in our opinion, complementing the political portraits of the Russian state leaders.

Figure 2 demonstrates that in the revolutionary and the first post-revolutionary years, the leaders' speeches were dominated by positive agenda. By the mid-1920's it was replaced by criticism of the Soviet state machine that had been formed by that time. In the 1930's and 1940's

there were proposals for individual improvements. This is also typical for the early 1960's, but in the rest of the years criticism prevailed. This is especially noticeable in the 1990s and early 2000s. Positive agenda began to prevail in the leaders' speeches about the Civil Service only in the most recent years.

The specific topic of the speeches devoted to the Civil Service is interesting. In accordance with the developed methodology, the whole array of statements was divided into seven thematic groups.

The largest amounts of all the quotes were on the effectiveness of the state apparatus (23% of the total sample size) and about the personnel work (21%). An example of the first type is the following quotation: "*In our state apparatus there are still a lot of redundant links, in parallel performing the same work*." (Khrushchev, 1956). An example of a quote on the second group is: "*Of particular importance is the question of bold and timely promotion of new, young cadres*" (Stalin, 1939).

A somewhat smaller share is made of statements about interactions between the Civil Service and society (16%), corruption (15%) and relations of the Public Service with politics (12%).

The interaction between the Civil Service and society is well described by the words: "*Every Soviet official must constantly remember that by his attitude to clients ... his sincerity and integrity, Soviet people judge our state apparatus*" (Khrushchev, 1961). On corruption: "*The weakness of state power ... has become a breeding ground for corruption*" (Yeltsin, 1996). On the connection between public service and politics: "*Responsibility for the country is formed ... when people see that power is transparent, accessible and it itself "works"... Power should not be an isolated caste*" (Putin, 2012).

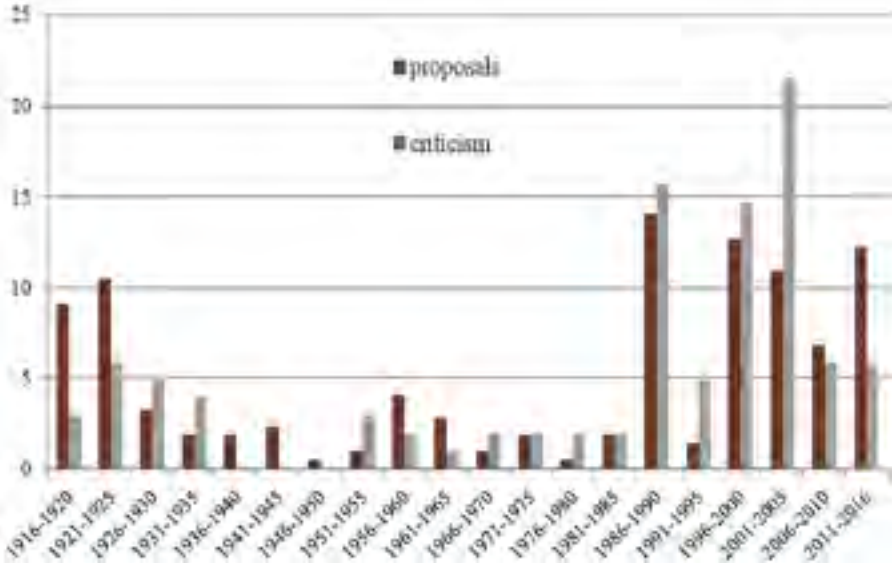
Rarely were discussed issues of payment system and the number of civil servants (7% each). An example of statement on payment system of civil servants: "*Today our state is not rich enough to pay a civil servant wages in amounts comparable to those of civil servants in other countries. But we will try to eliminate this gap gradually*" (Medvedev, 2003). On the number of official's staff: "*We will go to a significant reduction of the administrative apparatus*" (Gorbachev, 1988).

These are somewhat unexpected results, as it seems at the usual level that most of the references to Public Service in the public space are devoted to corruption and the number of officials.

The distribution of citations in chronology shows that the topic of interaction between the Civil Service and society was most in demand during the period of 1916-1920 (15% of quotations in this group pertain to this period), and also during 1921-1925 (13%). Issues of correlation between bureaucracy and politics were more often discussed in the same periods (24% and 11%). Special attention to the problems of public personnel management was paid in 1986-1990 (21%) and the problems of corruption were mainly discussed in 1996-2000 and 2011-2016 (23% each). Payment system of civil servants was more often discussed in the political discourse in 2001-2005 (24%), the number of personnel – in 1986-1990 (29%), and its effectiveness – in 1986-1990 and 2001-2005 (20% and 19%).

This distribution of priorities suggests that aspects of the political role of bureaucracy are actualized during the times of social instability. Topics of number, payment system and efficiency of Civil Service are more often discussed in the context of the official legislation development. Personnel work is one of the priorities when there is a need for a radical change in building the leadership, and corruption issues attract attention, as a rule, during periods of economic recession and manifestations of crisis phenomena in the economy, in which society is prone to blame unscrupulous bureaucrats.

Figure 2. Distribution of proposals and of criticism by years (per cent)



Correlation of proposals and criticism in the thematic sections shows that in the issues of Civil Service relations with society and politics the share of proposals exceeds 80%. In the matters of personnel work it is also approaching 80%. In statements on the payment system of bureaucrats the share of proposals is 67%, and on their number is 62%, on the efficiency is 56%, and on matters of corruption is only 49%. This means that political leaders, as a rule, are better versed in the former issues and worse in the latter. If the issues of increasing openness, accountability of the Civil Service to society and political leadership proposals are more often reduced to good wishes and slogans, then questions of effectiveness and fighting against corruption

require specificity. In these cases politicians find it easier to criticize the current practice than to offer something for its real change.

Distribution of the country's leaders' statements on bureaucracy regarding these topics shows that Stalin made a quarter of all speeches about the role of Civil Service in society, its relationship with politics and on personnel work. Putin owns 40% of all citations about corruption and a third about effectiveness. Medvedev made a third of all statements on the payment system of bureaucrats. Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Medvedev made one fifth of the quotations about the number of bureaucracies.

Nicholas II in his manifestos dwelt on socio-political aspects. Lenin mainly emphasized the public role and effectiveness of bureaucracy; Stalin and Khrushchev spoke about staffing; Brezhnev and Gorbachev paid attention to staffing and efficiency. Yeltsin shifted emphasis on corruption problems; Putin often spoke about the effective-

Table 1. Comparison of statements by political leaders of the Soviet and post-Soviet period about bureaucracy

Soviet period	Post-Soviet period
«We want to have a state apparatus as a **means of servicing the people**, and some persons of this state apparatus want to turn it into a **mean of feeding**» Stalin (1923)	«Our bureaucracy still largely represents a closed ... caste, which understands the public service as a **kind of business**. And so the number one task for us is still ... providing them with high-quality **public services to the population** « Putin (2005)
«Our state apparatus ... is to the greatest extent a **vestige of the old one**... It is only slightly tinted from above» Lenin (1923)	«Many of the **previous principles** of building the state apparatus and methods of management are still preserved» Yeltsin (1997)
«**For the most part**, employees of the state apparatus are **qualified, conscientious, attentive people**. Their work deserves high praise and respect» Brezhnev (1971)	«When we criticize bureaucracy all the time, I want to note that the **overwhelming majority** [of officials] ... are **decent and responsible people**. This is a special responsibility ... « Putin (2012)
«There are still attempts by **ministries and departments** to maintain **dictatorial habits** in relation to enterprises» Gorbachev (1988)	«The **executive branch** lives as if they continue to be the **headquarters of the centralized national economy**» Putin (2002)
«The pace of restructuring [*perestroika*] ... is **slowed down** by the cumbersomeness and inefficiency of the administrative apparatus» Gorbachev (1987)	''The system of authorities ... is arranged in such a way that it **slows down**, and in many cases simply stops the transformation [of economy]» Putin (2001)
«We need a **small but highly qualified** staff of ministries» Khrushchev (1956)	«The state apparatus should be **efficient, compact and working**» Putin (2002)
«It is **necessary** ... to **reduce and simplify, make cheaper and improve** our state and co-operative apparatus ... The **inflated staff** and the unprecedented gluttony of our governing bodies have become a byword» Stalin (1929)	«It's about ... **absolute necessity of saving money, a drastic reduction** in expenses due to «squeezing'' the **excessively inflated bureaucratic apparatus** both in the center and in the regions» Putin (1999)
«The issue of the **personnel reserve** for promotion is rather important» Khrushchev (1959)	«The Civil Service ... needs a new system for the formation of the **personnel reserve**» Medvedev (2002)
«The danger of bureaucracy is expressed ... in the fact that it binds the energy and initiative of the people, it **keeps under press colossal reserves** that are hidden in our system» Stalin (1929)	«The **colossal possibilities of the country are blocked** by a cumbersome, slow, inefficient state apparatus» Putin (2002)
«Coordinated, well-functioning and flexible administrative apparatus is called upon to be an **effective working tool** of perestroika» Gorbachev (1988)	«The state apparatus should become a **working tool for the implementation** of economic policy» Putin V.V. (2002)
«People ... who believe that ... laws are not written for them ... How to deal with such employees? They should be dismissed without hesitation from leading positions **regardless of their merits in the past** « Stalin (1934)	«Neither the leading position, nor the high ties, nor **past merits** cannot be a cover for impure representatives of power» Putin (2016)
«The **redistribution of functions and powers** is a very important matter ... It requires a strong **political impetus** and a clear legal basis» Gorbachev (1988)	«With all the difficulties that have arisen, the **administrative reform** ... has dragged on. ... Obviously, an additional **political impulse** is needed « Putin (2003)
«The task of combating bureaucracy in our program is set as an **extremely long work**» Lenin (1920)	«The reform of the Civil Service ... is **the permanent process**» Medvedev (2003)

Note: all translations of the statements into English and their boldface are made by the author.

ness of the Civil Service and about the corruption; and Medvedev emphasized the corruption without binding to efficiency. Other leaders most often talked about the effectiveness of management apparatus.

It can be concluded that the choice of subjects for speeches about the Civil Service was dictated in each case by both individual priorities of a statesman and by political situation in a specific historical period.

For example, Lenin as the creator of the new state gave priority to building communication between social institutions. Stalin as the organizer of the state apparatus had an interest in personnel work. In the case of Gorbachev, the cadre theme of speeches was probably connected with his attempts to build an optimal power design for himself. For Yeltsin corruption theme was a compelled priority. It was observed in 22% of his speeches, while in 17% of them he spoke about personnel issues and effectiveness and in 15% about paying bureaucrats. That is the speeches of the first president of Russia were balanced on the topic. Putin unites the issues of combating corruption and of effective governance in his desire to provide a new quality of power, whereas Medvedev's statements about the fight against corruption have become his "visiting card", an independent activity.

Trends and Conclusions

When one studies the statements of political leaders about bureaucracy, their parallelism draws attention. Despite the seeming variety, in fact they can be reduced to several key topics, for each of which politicians of different generations and views voiced similar thoughts. In a number of cases, there are even lexical coincidences (see **Table 1**).

Presented in Table 1 collection of quotations includes only a small part of the parallels we have identified. Often the closeness of formulations is observed not only in pairs, but also in a much larger number of quotes from different years.

Words used were different, but emotions and meaning in them are the same. For example:

1) "*We need not **hard and indifferent officials** ... but inexhaustible and selfless fighters ... putting public interests above all else*" (Malenkov, 1952)[2];

2) *"We need not **unthinking officials**, ... we need intelligent and boldly acting initiative employees"* (Khrushchev, 1956);

3) "*We must admit that there are still also **soulless officials***" (Brezhnev, 1971).

The study of the whole set of materials makes it possible to single out the continuity of political thought with regard to the direction of reform of the bureaucracy:

First, the Civil Service should be updated, rejuvenated, reduced and placed under control of society;

Second, the authority of officials should be clearly defined, and their work is aimed at positive changes in the economy and provision of good public services;

Third, protection of the Civil Service system by bureaucratic barriers is unacceptable, but so is inadmissible pressure from the state apparatus on institutes of a civil society.

In general, the vector of transformation can be reduced to the following formula: "*Our government and the party have **no other interests and other concerns, except those that the people have***" (Stalin, 1935), or in other words: "*Power exists not for itself but for **effective governance according to the interests of citizens*** " (Medvedev, 2008).

It is difficult not to notice the semantic proximity of the citations given. One might even think that their authors systematically draw ideas and images in the works of their predecessors. However, this is not so, even or rather, on the contrary.

On the one hand, in the Soviet period speeches of any leaders included references to Lenin. His works were studied in detail in a special Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU Central Committee. True, it cannot be said that this activity went beyond mere dogmatic and rather formalist. All generations of party leaders called themselves "loyal Leninists," but each of them acted in his own way, guided by the tasks of the current moment.

On the other hand, since Khrushchev time the criticism of the predecessor for departing from the notorious Leninist principles became some kind of tradition. The shift in the political system after 1991 did not change this tradition. As a result, the leaders of the new Russia in different years quoted the words of American presidents, Russian tsars and philosophers, but ignored their immediate predecessors. The tradition of scientific study of the work by the nation's former leaders is also undeveloped: experts refer most often to the statements of the current leader.

This trend contributes to a short historical memory of the recent past. The society and the elite are dominated by the desire to blame previous leaders for their own unjustified expectations. It does not imply systematic comparison of plans and achieved results, which is necessary for the society development and progress in the social sciences.

The leaders of the polar political orientation voiced the textually and substantively close theses on the bureaucracy reform. What does it mean? In our opinion, the existence of similar problems in different social contexts makes people with different political views describe them in a similar way.

Another thing is that the problems of bureaucracy, judging by the quoted statements, haven't changed throughout the whole period under study. Changes in the political conjuncture apparently do not lead to drastic changes in the principles of bureaucratic apparatus. Even strong and authoritarian political leaders cannot change these principles, they have to reckon with them, as can be seen, if only from the following statements:

2 Georgy Malenkov was a deputy Prime-Minister and Prime-Minister of the USSR in 1940-1950.

"*Often this machine [bureaucracy] does not belong to us, but* ***we belong to it***" (Lenin, 1922);

"*Organizational work* ***decides everything****, including the* ***fate of the political line*** *itself, its fulfillment, or its failure*" (Stalin, 1934);

"*Departmental separatism is no less of a threat than national or religious separatism... The strength of the state and the effectiveness of power* ***depend directly on work of the state apparatus****, on competence and honesty of the conductors of state policy themselves*" (Yeltsin, 1999).

The political power and the administrative apparatus are interrelated. But political power is changing, and the administrative apparatus remains, so it often turns out to be more influential and acts as an independent force.

How to resist this? We find the answer in the 2015 President Putin's Address to the Federal Assembly: "*We need to* ***trust more to the civil society*** *and non-profit organizations. They often* ***work more efficiently****, better [than civil servants], with sincere concern for people,* ***less bureaucracy*** *in their work*." It's hard to argue with these words, the matter is for their implementation.

The existence of the Civil Service oriented to servicing power, not people, and is convenient for any ruling elite. For this elite is often ready to forgive its "own" bureaucracy for high prices, bloated personnel staff, corruption and inefficiency. Exactly here, in our opinion, lies the reason why politicians of different views and epochs criticize the same defects of the state apparatus in similar words. But these true words do not come true, and then the next generation of leaders deservedly criticizes its predecessors, but does not hurry to change the state of affairs themselves.

Thus, the key findings of the study are as follows:

1) Our main hypothesis has confirmed that the general vector of the Civil Service reform and the proposed set of measures are relatively weakly influenced by the political conjuncture, since the functions and institutional characteristics of the Civil Service are stable.

2) We established that the statements of political leaders about the state bureaucracy correspond with political cycles, and these issues interest political leaders only in the general context of the elite struggle. On the one hand, it serves as a win-win trick for criticizing the previous leadership, on the other hand, promises to reduce the number of personnel staff and costs for bureaucracy and bring the government apparatus closer to people are an important element of the pre-election rhetoric of politicians attracting the voters.

3) In the statements of leaders of different political orientations there is an idea about the need to gradually displace bureaucracy structures by institutions of the civil society. Practical implementation of this idea encounters a "paradox of loyalty": bureaucracy serves as a conductor of political course, and any power needs it more than its voters before the next election. Therefore, the weaker the democratic representation is in the country, the closer are the ties of politicians and bureaucrats, which together make up the ruling regime.

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