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**CONFERENCE AND ROUND TABLE ON PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION IN MODERN RUSSIA AND
HUNGARY IN THE FRAMEWORK
OF THE MSU–NUPS ACADEMIC WEEK
(OCTOBER 9–10, 2018)**

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Reviewing the Theory of Public Administration: Comparison of Approaches of Russia and Central and Eastern Europe

The article is devoted to the theoretical discourse on the prospects for the implementation of the Neo-Weberian paradigm in the EU countries, as well as the theoretical foundations and practices of the dilemma “strong state/weak bureaucracy vs. weak state/strong bureaucracy” on the example of the modern Russian system of public administration in comparison with the experience of Hungary. Particular attention is paid to the prospects and practices of strategic planning in modern Russia.

KEYWORDS:

Anti-Weberianism, bureaucracy, Neo-Weberianism, programming, public administration, strategic planning

In modern conditions, the demand from the civil society to improve the efficiency of public administration system is actualised both at the national and global levels. At the same time, the implementation of various theoretical approaches to public administration from classical concepts in the traditions of Weberianism to more modern concepts of “good governance”, electronic, mobile, smart state is faced with the limitations of the current stage of society development as a whole, as well as national and regional features of the development of some world regions. So, for EU countries, Neo-Weberianism as the basic model of governance today faces serious criticism from both researchers¹ and the European population. In the EU space, the latest economic crisis, the inability of state structures to ensure the safety of citizens, inefficient migration policy, the decline in the legitimacy of the institutions of power and governance of European countries as a whole were a direct consequence of the failure of liberalism as a modern ideology of public administration.

The current institutional state body’s design in several European countries, which can be characterised as “strong institutions” with limited role of political regulators, has proven to be ineffective. In such circumstances, there is a need to increase the practice of political regulation, based on political will, coordination of the interests of different actors in the process of the state policy’s formation and implementation. In other words, the EU states have a paradoxical situation related to the requirements of the system of public administration not so much to support the existing institutions and regulatory methods of the regulation of public relations as much as possible, but to expand the practice of using more flexible ways to resolve contradictions in society in various formats proposed by the policy as a special regulator. The theoretical basis of such a request is the so-called Anti-Weberian model, the implementation of which is possible under the symbolic motto “more politics”. In a certain way, such a concept can be compared with the “governance without government”/“governance without government” approach and with the network approach in general.

In a number of Central and Eastern European countries, some theoretical concepts, such as “good governance”, have been successfully implemented until recently. An example is the system of “Good Governance Report” existing in Hungary since 2015 as a form of joint management of the state and society, aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the country and improving the system of public administration.² It is based on a permanent dialogue between the government and citizens, the division of responsibility for the state policy on the basis of continuous evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities. However, in modern conditions, the demand for increasing the role of bureaucracy, the priority of political elites over civil structures is becoming more tangible.

¹ This position was expressed by the Dean of the Faculty of Science of Public Governance and Administration of the National University of Public Service (NUPS) of Hungary, Prof. Dr. Norbert Kis, at the conference on October 9, 2018 in the framework of the Academic Week of Public Administration of the Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov on October 9–11, 2018 (National University of Public Service [NUPS], Budapest).

² Report 2018.

However, it should be noted that the demand for improving the efficiency of public administration in the context of the crisis of the legitimacy of the ruling regimes in Europe, the use of network methods is not a new modern challenge. A similar situation has developed since the 1980s.³ Thus, the dilemma of “strong state/weak bureaucracy vs. weak state/strong bureaucracy” is traditional for this world region, and the prevalence of one of the contrasted “extremes” depends on specific historical, economic and political conditions. The tendency is that in the conditions of increasing uncertainty of the environment, the requirement of increasing political mechanisms is actualised. However, it appears that this desire to minimise the role of formal rules and procedures is not universal.

Thus, Russian practices of public administration demonstrate completely different approaches to its implementation. In the Russian case, it would be appropriate to talk about the existing model of “weak state/strong bureaucracy” with an objective need for greater systematisation and rationalisation of the public administration system, maintaining a “strong” institutional design, gradually reducing the use of so-called “manual control” mechanisms.

In general, the distinctive features of public administration in modern Russia are the low efficiency of institutions, a high degree of personal legitimacy with a low degree of trust in the authorities and state bodies, in other words, a low degree of institutional legitimacy, a limited number of decision-making actors, the dominance of influential groups with key resources, political and administrative networks in making principal decisions with a limited involvement of civil experts and international structures in the formation of public policy in almost all areas. It should be noted that the policy implemented by the Russian state is assessed by citizens as quite satisfactory, however, the general perception of the strength/weakness of the Russian state is a result of a traditionally high personal authority of political leaders in the modern Russian history.

The basis of the state operation as a political and management institution on a long-term basis is strategic planning, which is a set of national guidelines, priorities and ideology of development. As a rule, under democratic regimes, these strategic goals are developed jointly by all stakeholders in the decision-making process. The specificity of the modern Russian state is that the political regime plays a dominant role in determining the prospects for social development. A key proponent of the annual message of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly, decrees of the President etc.

Some series of decrees⁴ are a priority basis for medium-term planning; they contain specific instructions for the activities of the Russian Government in the eight-year perspective. So, 11 decrees of the President dated 07.05.2012 provided 218 instructions to the Government in such directions as creation of attractive conditions for business, increase of salaries of state employees, etc.⁵ The last “May Decree” also forms the basis for the development of Russia until 2024 and is implemented as 12 national projects in

³ MIKHAILOVA 2009, 40–58.

⁴ Presidential Decree 2018.

⁵ Consolidated annual report 2017.

various fields: health, education, ecology, demography, employment, culture, development of small and medium businesses. The first attempt to implement national projects in the history of modern, post-Soviet public administration was made in 2005 (“Modern Health Care”, “Quality Education”, “Affordable Housing”, “Effective Agriculture”⁶), but the implementation of these initiatives, despite the positive changes in such indicators as the improvement of the demographic situation by reducing the overall mortality rate and increasing the birth rate, the influx of specialists in the field of education and health care with an increase in wages there, etc., in general, cannot be assessed as effective, mainly since the key indicators were not achieved.

It is noteworthy that the ineffective assessment of the Russian bureaucracy and state institutions comes not only from the population, but also from the state structures themselves. Taking into account the fact that public administration is implemented mainly through programming, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of public programs is a formal basis for the above negative statements of the current state of modern domestic public administration.

So, for example, in the annual summary reports on the results of program implementation in Russia, prepared by one of the key ministries – the Ministry of Economic Development – no more than 15% of all programs have been evaluated as highly effective (in 2016, 41 state programs were implemented but only 6 of them are recognised as highly effective; in 2017, 40 programs were implemented, 6 of them received a high rating of efficiency, 12 programs are implemented with efficiency above the average level and 12 programs deemed satisfactory, 6 are characterised by a low degree of efficiency!).⁷ Along with experts, the state authorities themselves see the reasons for the inefficiency of public administration, which can be reduced to the weakness of Russian administrative institutions. A more detailed reference to the problematic aspects of strategic planning and programming as a practice of implementation of strategic guidelines allows us to highlight such “failures” as the lack of communication between the strategic goals and specific indicators laid down in the programs, the insufficient responsibility of subcontractors and participants of state programs, the inconsistency of indicators and their “obsolescence” in the implementation process, the lack of project approach in the activities of civil servants, as well as the lack of a unified system of programming at the federal and regional levels.⁸

It seems that the requirement to improve the efficiency of the Russian state, the real, not the declared, quality of institutions’ work on the basis of inclusion of expert and civil structures in the decision-making process, will provide the further legitimisation of the political regime and increase the trust degree between the Russian state and society. One of the ways to solve this problem is the transformation of mechanisms for recruiting political leaders and elites on the basis of introduction of democratic procedures in the domestic civil service. And the first positive experience is already available in the form of the project

⁶ National priority projects 2017.

⁷ Presidential Decree 2018.

⁸ Consolidated annual report 2017.

“Leaders of Russia”, that allowed to introduce representatives from the civil society into the political elite.

Thus, for modern Russia the dilemma “strong state/weak bureaucracy vs. weak state/strong bureaucracy” is solved in a radically opposite way in comparison with the European experience in the direction of “strong state”, “less policy, more rules and procedures”. For the modern Russian state, the high role of political regulators should be supplemented, and eventually replaced in some areas by effective institutions within the framework of a “strong state/weak bureaucracy”. A weak bureaucracy means that it should primarily seek not only to reproduce the existing intra-organizational relations, act within the interests of elite groups, the ruling regime, but also to establish effective interaction with citizens.

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Ekaterina A. Panova

Recruitment and Selection Tools of Candidates for Managerial Positions in the Russian Civil Service: Trends of Development

The article contains the results of the analysis of recent years' main trends and the evolution of approaches and tools of the recruiting and selection processes of the Russian civil service. The main revealed trends are the following: digitalisation of selecting procedures for the civil service, as well as the tools for assessing the competencies of candidates, the focus on attracting the largest possible number of interested participants to take part in competitions for vacant positions of the Russian civil service. Based on the analysis, it was concluded that the modern Russian public service makes a request for managers of a new format: managers with a wide range of diverse competencies.

KEYWORDS:

Russian civil service, recruiting and selection of candidates, managerial positions, managerial competencies, trends in human resource management in the civil service

Discussions about the possibility of entering the civil service without ties and acquaintances with stable periodicity occur in the Russian society. As studies show, a significant part of society (up to 50% of the respondents⁹) shares the view that the attraction of personnel to the public service is carried out by acquaintance, kinship or personal loyalty. At the same time, a regulatory framework has been established in the Russian Federation, which establishes equal access of citizens of the Russian Federation to the public service. First of all, we are talking about paragraph 4 of Article 32 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which defines that “citizens of the Russian Federation have equal access to public service”. In addition, in Article 4 clause 3 of the Federal Law “On the State Civil Service of the Russian Federation” dated July 27, 2004 No. 79-FZ as one of the principles of the civil service indicates such a principle as “equal access of citizens who speak the state language of the Russian Federation to the civil service and equal conditions for its passage regardless of gender, race, nationality, origin, property and official status, place of residence, attitudes towards religion, beliefs, belonging to public associations, as well as of other circumstances not related to the professional and business qualities of a civil servant”.

The main instrument for ensuring and implementing the constitutional right of citizens of the Russian Federation for equal access to public service is the competition and, accordingly, competitive selection for the positions of the Russian civil service. Statement 1 of the Regulations on the competition for filling the vacant position of the civil service of the Russian Federation¹⁰ directly indicates this. In this article, the main research attention will be focused on the trends of recent years in the evolution of approaches and tools for the selection for managerial positions of the Russian civil service.

Today, all those who wish to enter the civil service of the Russian Federation can find information about public service vacancies, look at information on the specifics of the vacant position and requirements for candidates, as well as apply for participation in the vacancy contest through the special portal “Public Administration and Management Personnel” (<https://gossulzhba.gov.ru/>). After submitting documents for the vacancy, the portal has the ability to track the stages of the resume in the so-called “personal account”. As practice shows, a significant number of federal and regional government agencies have managed to build a working holistic and “transparent” system for working with questionnaires submitted to participate in the competition for the vacant position of public service. “Transparency” of competitive procedures is provided by the criteria for selecting winners, initially known candidates and the competition commission, as well as publicly stating the final results on the state agency website.

Digitalisation (transition to electronic format) of working with vacant positions candidates of the civil service is an important trend in the development of a modern personnel management system of the Russian civil service. At the same time, the in-depth

⁹ Study 2014.

¹⁰ Regulations 2005.

implementation of the capabilities of information technologies is not limited only to the reception of questionnaires for job seekers. Information capabilities are actively integrated into the field of assessment tools for professional and personal competencies of potential civil servants. Electronic testing and video presentations have become the norm for modern assessment centres in the civil service. They have been actively developed in a number of state bodies (as, for example, in the Moscow Government), in other regions they are in the formative stage. Nevertheless, it is possible to fix the trend towards an increase of electronic resources and capabilities used to select candidates.

The digitalisation of the selecting candidates procedure for the civil service today extends to positions of all levels of government and groups of positions in the civil service – from the youngest to the highest. The electronic format of submission of documents and subsequent selection procedures implemented in electronic form allow to simultaneously implement a number of functions and tasks. First, the ability to submit documents and pass some of the screening tests remotely using the Internet has a positive effect on the number of people involved in these processes. The digitalisation of procedures forms a real chance for every citizen of the Russian Federation to take part in seeking a vacant position in the civil service. Thus, we can say that the second trend in the development of the selection of candidates processes is attracting the ever largest number of interested participants in competitions for vacant positions.

The next trend in this area is the use of a combination of various IT methods for assessing the competencies of candidates. In addition, each assessment method is selected in accordance with the assessed competence. In particular, the video presentation method (video story about yourself according to a specific predetermined format) allows you to track and evaluate the candidate's culture of oral speech, his communication skills, skill of high-quality presentation of information in the context of limited time resources, as well as a number of other competencies.

In the modern Russian system of personnel selection for civil service, such an approach is used in which electronic test questions cover a whole range of knowledge, the presence of which is critical in the current model of a Russian civil servant in general and a person holding a managerial position in government structures and institutions, in particular. For example, in the framework of the resonant competition for the leaders of the new generation "Leaders of Russia", a system of aggregated on-line testing was applied for the following thematic blocks: history of Russia, geography of Russia, literature and poetry of Russia, architecture of Russia, knowledge of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and main socio-economic principles of the country. The cumulative task included tests that diagnose the degree of verbal and numerical abilities of the contest participants. A separate unit included a test aimed at identifying the managerial potential of candidates for leadership positions of state structures. As the results of the first contest "Leaders of Russia" has shown, 75% of the registered participants were eliminated at the stage of electronic testing.

The content of the tests used in the current system of selection of candidates for managerial positions of the civil service shows that the Russian public service makes a request for managers of a new format: managers with a wide range of diverse competencies.

At the same time, it is also possible to talk about transformations in the model of the leaders that are required by a modern government. A few years ago, in order to obtain a leading position in the Russian civil service, it was necessary to have a sufficiently long civil service experience or professional experience. In particular, to occupy the positions of the highest group of the federal state civil service positions, a candidate must have had at least six years of experience in the civil service or at least seven years of work in a specialised position; for positions of the main group of positions, the requirements for length of service in the civil service or work in profession were four and five years, respectively. In October 2017, changes were made to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of January 16, 2017 No. 16 *On the qualification requirements for civil service experience or professional work experience, education, which is necessary to fill the posts of the federal civil service.* In accordance with the amendments, today a citizen of the Russian Federation may be accepted for the highest position of the federal civil service if he/she has four years of experience in the civil service or professional experience and for the main position if he/she has two years of experience.

The produced changes in the approaches and tools for the selection of candidates for the managerial positions of the Russian civil service lead to the conclusion that today the civil service is interested in increasing the number of new managers: young managers with broad knowledge in various fields and well-developed communication skills, teamwork, successful functioning in the conditions of tough resources, possessing emotional interest in serving for the motherland. This rejuvenation of the civil service personnel, on the one hand, for obvious reasons, is a positive trend; on the other hand, it raises the question of how well the model of open recruitment of candidates for leadership positions from outside the civil service is combined with the model of lifelong employment previously implemented in the Russian public service.

In our opinion, intensive recruitment and appointment to management positions in state structures of candidates with a limited civil service experience produce the risks of leaving the state service for those young professionals whose career opportunities occupy a significant place in the system of motives. Reducing the chance for staff to be promoted to leadership positions from within the state body for a long-term quality service due to the intensification of appointments to them by candidates who are the winners in various kinds of competitions from the outside creates the basis for destabilising personnel growth and increasing staff turnover in middle positions. Levelling the amplification of this kind of potential problems requires the development of a special document regulating the issues of managing the infrastructural personnel reserve, talents in particular, and the entire succession system in the organization as a whole. Such a strategic approach to personnel management is still gaining momentum in the Russian state civil service.

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Natalya N. Oparina

Public Service: Modern Trends in Succession and Talent Management

The article is devoted to the analysis of current trends in the succession and talent management of the public sector. The author has studied the effectiveness of human resource management in public institutions of various countries, analysed methodological documents in this area, examined the experience of state organizations and their HR departments in implementing talent and succession management, revealed the possibilities for young people in the Russian civil service structures.

KEYWORDS:

public service, talent management, succession management, youth policy

Nowadays, more and more countries are facing the crisis of public administration, particularly the crisis of human resources management in civil services. The pressure on civil servants from both the state and society is increasing, the number and budget of public services is decreasing, the staff of the civil service is aging and there is a mass retirement (even in the conditions of increasing the retirement age in our country), while the volume of tasks and large-scale projects is significantly multiplying.

Qualitative improvement of work with talents, their attraction, development and retention in the system of public administration is a requirement of the time. And modern HR departments of the public service should become strategic partners of the country's leader to achieve the competitiveness of the public service.

In order to improve this work in the public administration system, the world-famous consulting company Boston Consulting Group conducted a study of public services, for which more than 400 human resources managers from different countries were interviewed and conclusions were made about the priority for the development of talent and succession management in public administration.¹¹

In turn, in the framework of the Presidential Decree of 11 August 2016 № 403 *Main Directions of the State Civil Service of the Russian Federation Development for 2016–2018*, the Concept of the Russian Federation Public Administration Staffing System was prepared.¹² This document not only mentions talent management and succession, but also describes these terms, and integrates new concepts into specific human resources technologies. The concept of talent management has also appeared in the Standard of Personnel Management developed by the Ministry of Labour of the Russian Federation, covering all activities of HR departments.¹³

It should be noted that these documents do not define the concept of talent and talented civil servants and talent management strategies. In particular, talent management in the public sector can be implemented through an exclusive (selection of the best, and their further development and promotion) or inclusive (search and development of talent in each employee) approaches.¹⁴

The Concept of the Russian Federation Public Administration Staffing System, 2017, and the Standard of Personnel Management of the Public Service of the Russian Federation (Draft) are considered in a rather narrow sense – as a program of measures to attract talented citizens to the public service. However, an effective talent management system should include both attracting and developing and retaining talents in the civil service.

The state program *Strategic Management of Talents in the Republic of Tatarstan for 2015–2020* can be cited as an example of successful work with talents. Within the framework of this program, the search for talents begins from childhood, then work with talents is included in the system of professional orientation of young people, and it is used

¹¹ AUDIER et al. 2016.

¹² Ranepa 2017.

¹³ Standard s. a.

¹⁴ KLIMOVA 2016, 26–37.

to improve the education system and competencies of the young people; then the strategy of talent management is determined, including the public service, the processes of attracting, developing and retaining young people are launched.¹⁵

Highly-developed systems of personnel reserve and succession management are critical for the development and retention of talent. As the experience of foreign and domestic corporations has shown, the system of succession management, rather than the traditional system of personnel reserve, is more effective in the talent management system. Under the succession management, the author means purposeful activity, including strategic planning of management personnel, identification of future managers, purposeful work on the development of their professional, managerial and leadership competencies, management of their motivation and career advancement. As can be seen from the definition, succession management permeates almost all personnel processes: strategic personnel management, workforce planning, selection and evaluation, personnel reserve, training and development, motivation, career management, etc.¹⁶

Such examples of reservists and successors combination have already been appreciated in the public service. One of the winners of the competition of the HR best practices (2016) was the Saratov Regional Government with the program of succession planning of management personnel. Within the framework of this program the Methodical Guide on succession planning of managerial personnel of the Saratov region was approved. This is a well-developed document confirming the deep awareness of the Saratov region leadership of the need for succession planning, as well as understanding of the differences between the managerial personnel reserve and succession management.¹⁷

It should also be noted that the Ministry of Labour of the Russian Federation (hereinafter: the Ministry of Labour) announced its main task for 2018. It is the task to attract young professionals from among the promising graduates of universities, which should be at least 20% of the novice officials. To solve this problem, the Ministry of Labour offers state bodies to hold open days, invite young people for internships, involve them in innovative projects and form a personnel reserve from among those interested in the “active implementation of project activities and the use of modern technologies”.¹⁸

Thus, in order to improve the professionalism and competence of the Russian Federation public service in the context of digitalisation of our economy, it is necessary to build effective systems of succession and talent management, as well as implement active work with young people to attract, develop and retain professionals of a new generation who already possess the competencies of the future.

¹⁵ Official Site s. a.

¹⁶ OPARINA 2018.

¹⁷ Methodical Guide 2015.

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