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STRATIFICATION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AS THE RESULT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM: CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The collapse of the Soviet communist political system led to forced public sector reforms in the respective countries. A rather complex system of public service has emerged in Russia over 25 years of reform. The purpose of the article is to conduct a stratification analysis of the current state of the public service in the Russian Federation in the context of public service reform by the case study method.

The article presents a case study of the current situation of stratification of public servants in Russia. The analysis is based on the application of a group of methods: analysis of statistical data, a questionnaire survey of public servants and secondary data analysis.

The analysis allowed for the stratification of public servants in Russia on the following parameters: type of service, branch of authority, level of authority, sectoral and territorial affiliation of government authorities, gender and age of employees, level of education, income, self-identity.

Keywords: public service, public service reform, public servant, stratification.

1. Introduction

In the early 1990s, several dozen communist states were forced to re-build public administration systems taking into account the regime change, the demands of the time and the economy. However, there was no uniformity in the choice of technologies and directions for reform in the post-communist states. The reform of the public service also had its own specifics.

The formation of the public service of the Russian Federation began in 1991 with the adoption of the Decree of the President of the RSFSR on the establishment of a rational public service (Decree of the President of the RSFSR, 1991). It involved the normative provision of the public service and the establishment of the Main Directorate for Personnel Training. The modern stage of the public service reform in Russia began in 2001 with the adoption of the Concept of Public Service Reform in the Russian Federation. In subsequent years, this process was carried out within the framework of three federal programs for the public service reform – in 2003-2005, 2009-2013 and 2015-2018. The basic normative legal acts that determined the structure of the Russian public service were adopted in 2003-2005.

The following areas of administrative reforms in the 21st century Russia are of great importance for our analysis. Firstly, a change of the public service system of the Russian Federation as a result of the adoption of a number of federal laws – ‘On the Public Service System of the Russian Federation’ in 2003, ‘On the Public Civil Service of the Russian Federation’ in 2004, ‘On Municipal Service in the Russian Federation’ in 2004 and their subsequent amendments. Secondly, a reduction of the number of the state apparatus, including attempts to downsize the public and municipal services’ employees. Thirdly, a qualitative improvement of employees: rejuvenation of the service, rise of the level of education of employees, etc. The fourth area of interest is the anti-corruption measures. They include a system of restrictions for all categories of public servants on generating income, as well as the requirement to report the income of employees and their family members.

2. Theoretical approaches to the stratification of public servants

In the early 1990s, reforms in the management system, the public sphere and the public service passed through the Western countries like a tsunami, forcing researchers to consider a new management paradigm. The public service and its reform gradually became a focus of research, which allowed for formulating a new methodological approach – the neo-managerial approach (Toonen, 2007). This scientific discourse has stayed relevant for a long time. It is developing in the direction of PA-democracy and the creation of the European Administrative Space (EAS), ‘the new approach developed after 2000, triggered formally by the United Nation’s (UN) Millennium Declaration, has tended to institutionalize and foster cooperation and strengthen public services in each country’ (Leskoviku, 2011) and ‘institution-building and public administration reform (PAR)’ (Muhhina, 2018).

Thus, the key task of the formation of the executive branch of the post-communist countries is to increase its capacity in the field of policy development and to improve the professionalism of its employees (Goetz and Wollmann, 2001). Changes in the implementation of the reform began everywhere and they were connected with the observance of anticorruption ethics, efficiency of work, 'transparency', improvement of professionalism in quality management, e-government development, etc. (Spacek, 2018; Pesti and Randma-Liiv, 2018; Nemeč, 2018). The issue of the staffing implications of such a large-scale approach to the public sector reform is being actively discussed. Some authors adhere to the idea that these changes will have a negative impact on those who enter the public service or work in it. For example, 'we argue that reinventing government, contrary to its most ardent proponents' rhetoric, threatens to undermine the important role played by public servants in modern democratic governments' (Kearney and Hays, 1998). Others, on the contrary, are convinced of the need for ongoing changes, and point out that modern human resources technologies take into account the potential of the information society and allow the use of social networks for hiring employees. It also allows transition from the commission selection to the decentralized selection, which makes the service itself more efficient (Berman *et al.*, 2015; Papapolychroniadis, Rossidis and Aspridis, 2017).

New conditions for public administration also change the requirements for personnel as a modern public servant is assessed and selected not only based on educational qualification or work experience, but also based on the results of their activities (Pichas, 1999). Studies also focus on a specific group of public servants – senior personnel – and the process of their recruitment (Kuperus and Rode, 2016). A big problem of the recent years is the politicization of senior employees, favoritism and patronage in the recruitment of employees, as noted in the OECD materials (OECD, 2011). It is known that the adoption of new laws on public service and the revision of old ones did not lead to depoliticization and professionalization of employees (Meyer-Sahling, 2009). Increasingly, researchers put forward ideas about the lack of strategic prospects of such reforms. These ideas are associated with a high degree of misunderstanding of the ideas and values that should underlie the public service by reformers and employees themselves (Hințea, 2018; Bileisis and Kovac, 2017).

Under these conditions, the study of the stratification of public servants is becoming quite a relevant direction, which allows assessing the differences that have developed within this group. It is necessary to turn to the theories presented in the works of Sorokin (1992) to analyze the stratification of public servants. Sorokin's (1992) theory of stratification points out that the basis of differentiation of groups is the uneven distribution of different rights, duties, privileges, values, authority and other ways of influencing individuals both within and between groups. Thus, Sorokin identified strata or social groups based on three grounds: economic, political and professional. Theoretical approaches to the problem of social stratification have been developed in numerous recent works, a short inventory of such papers can be found in Dyadin's study (2015, p. 17).

3. Research matter and methodology

The article is based on the case study method. The choice of this method is due to the peculiarity of the research problem, which involves studying the particularity and complexity of one case. The case study method gives an idea of a solution or a set of solutions, describes why the decisions were taken, how they were implemented, and what the result was (Schramm, 1971). To implement the case study method, we used a situation-procedural analysis of the interpretation and description of the existing situation of stratification of public servants. Despite the complexity of the public service structure in Russia and the diversity of processes, factors and development trends, we outlined common characteristics which resulted from the processes of social change and the public service reform of the Russian Federation.

The stratification of public servants was considered within the framework of class-stratification, functional and gender approaches. The authors analyzed the theoretical and methodological literature devoted to the study of the professional stratification of public servants, analyzed normative and legal documents regulating the public service system of the Russian Federation, and studied implemented socio-economic programs, reviews of the country's socio-economic development, various regulatory and methodological documents. A comprehensive approach was also implemented through the application of historical and problem-chronological methods. They allowed us to consider the stratification of public servants at the present stage of the country's development as a result of not only the collapse of the world socialist system and the political transformation of the USSR, but also the public service reform in Russia.

The study identified the internal differentiation of the public service of the Russian Federation, which was formed under the influence of the administrative reforms of the last 25 years, as the most important basis of the stratification of public servants. The authors formed a system of indicators for analyzing the stratification of public servants, which are as follows: type of service, branch of authority, level of authority, sectoral and territorial affiliation of government authorities, gender and age characteristics of employees, level of education, income and self-identity.

The authors conducted a desk study on various indicators of stratification of public servants. The data was taken from the official statistics of the Russian Federation, which is collected by the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat). However, all the statistical data necessary for the study was not presented in this source, which hampered the solution of the research task. In addition, official statistical data was collected at different periods by different methods. For example, data on individual departments was gradually introduced into the system of statistical observation of the public servants. Data on employees of customs, which received the status of territorial authorities (FCS) of Russia, were introduced in 2002. Data on the number of employees of the State Courier Service and the Federal Drug Control Service and their territorial authorities was introduced in 2005, data on Rosgvardia employees and its territorial authorities – in 2018. Part of the data is not aggregated. For example, there

is no data on employees substituting at the state and municipal positions, as well as on the public servants of other types of services. Therefore, we used statistical data from other sources, including normative acts, official documents and official Internet resources of state authorities and the media.

The analysis of the statistical data in the study was carried out using various methods. A summary and grouping of statistical observation materials was carried out in order to identify common features and patterns. Salaries of certain types of employees were converted from rubles to euros (at the exchange rate at the end of the analyzed year) for the analysis of income. A relative coefficient was calculated in order to compare the incomes of various types of public servants. The coefficient is the ratio of the average monthly salary of certain categories of public servants to the average monthly salary of all workers of the Russian Federation. The data is presented in Table 1. The ratio of incomes of various types of public servants (federal, regional, municipal) to the average salaries of employees of the respective region or subject of the Russian Federation was calculated to analyze regional differences and assess the level of incomes of public servants.

The data of our own empirical sociological research was used in the study of self-identification of public servants. This study analyzed the problems of stratification and identity of public civil and municipal servants in one of the subjects of the Russian Federation – the Sverdlovsk region. 490 employees in more than 40 localities of the region were interviewed using the quota sample questionnaire (which included two parameters – the type of employees and gender). 290 municipal employees and 200 public civil servants of the Sverdlovsk region were represented among the respondents. In total, data was collected on 55 questions (including tabulated data), which amounted to 154 initial variables.

4. Results of the study and discussion

4.1. Organization of the public service in the Russian Federation

In determining their public services, EU Member States used different approaches, usually rooted in the history of their states and changing over time. However, this experience was quite new for post-communist countries: they were approximately in the same position by the beginning of the reforms of the 1990s, when all public services (except military service) were not separately distinguished and regulated (Dimitrova, 2005). As a result of the reform, the analyzed countries adopted a limited concept of public service, where only professionals in public service and administration and professionals with state authority were public servants (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Romania, Hungary, etc.).

Let us consider the structure of public servants of the Russian Federation. It should be noted that the structure of the public service in Russia is determined by several factors: firstly, the aforementioned limited concept of the public service adopted in Russia; secondly, a federal structure of the state, which distinguishes the levels of service – federal and subjects of the federation; thirdly, the separation of the local government and the corresponding service from the system of public administration.

The most important aspect of the organization of the Russian public service is the separation of the political and administrative service. Persons holding public offices are excluded from the public service in Russia. These positions are established for the direct exercise of the authority of state agencies. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation approved the list of government positions (Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, 1995): the President, the Chairman of the Government and his deputies, ministers, chairmen, deputy chairmen and heads of committees and commissions of both chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (RF from here on), as well as heads of higher state executive authorities of the subjects of the RF, positions of ambassadors and representatives of the RF, positions of judges, and also heads of a number of other state bodies. The subjects of the Russian Federation can also make their lists of government positions; at the municipal level, the positions of elected officials of local authority (for example, heads of municipal entities).

In the Russian Federation there are two separate types of services – state and municipal. The first one works in state authorities, defines the public service as professional activity to ensure the execution of authority of the RF and the regions of the RF, public authorities and persons who hold public office (Federal Law No. 58-FZ, 2003). The second one works in local government; the municipal service, according to the norms of the Russian legislation, is not part of the public service system.

The public service of the Russian Federation is extremely differentiated. Firstly, the public service is divided into types – civil, military and other types of services (until 2016, law enforcement was called the third type of service), which includes the service in law enforcement and security agencies, customs, etc. Secondly, depending on the level of authority, the public service is divided into the federal service and the service of the Russian Federation subjects.

Internal stratification of various types of services of the Russian Federation is based on a legislatively fixed job hierarchy. Thus, the legislation of the RF divides positions of the public civil service in 4 categories (managers, assistants (advisers), specialists and providing specialists) and 5 groups (higher, major, leading, senior and junior). The positions of the municipal service are divided into groups only. In the civil service, specialists are the most numerous category (Bulletin of the Federal State Statistics Service, 2017). Both civil and municipal services are dominated by the positions of the senior group, followed by the leading group. It is worth noting that the share of employees occupying positions not classified as public or municipal (i.e. technical or support personnel) appeared and began to grow in public authorities of the RF after the reform associated with a reduction of the total number of employees.

4.2. The number of certain types of public servants

Let us consider the number of public servants in the Russian Federation. According to Rosstat, the total number of workers in these positions in the RF was 1,161.5 thousand in 2000 and 2,172.9 thousand at the end of 2017. At the end of 2017, there were 1,438.4 thousand employees in the state authorities, 262.2 thousand in the state

authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation, 472.2 thousand in municipal authorities (Rosstat, 2017).

When considering the distribution of personnel of public authorities by branches of power, the absolute majority belongs to the executive authorities – 1,888.3 thousand workers. 230.3 thousand employees work in the judiciary and the prosecution authorities, 30.6 thousand work in legislative authorities and 21.4 thousand in other authorities.

Let us consider the share of political and administrative employees in the number of employees of public authorities. There are more than 40 thousand government positions in Russia. Most of them are in the judicial system: there are more than 16,000 judges of federal courts (Presidential Decree No. 1758, 1999) and 14,000 justices of peace, which means that persons occupying these positions hold public office.

There are more municipal positions in Russia. According to the Ministry of Justice of Russia, in 2017 there were 22,891 heads of municipalities which held municipal positions. In addition, the positions of chairmen of the representative authority also belong to municipal positions if the head of the municipal entity is the head of the executive and administrative authority. According to our estimates, there are more than 4,500 such positions in Russia.

At the end of December 2017, the number of civil servants in federal state authorities amounted to 38.3 thousand people, or 77% of the total number of employees of these authorities (Rosstat, 'On the number and pay...', 2017). At the regional level (in federal state authorities and state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation), 696.7 thousand people occupied the positions of the public civil service in 2017, which amounted to 42.2% of the total number of employees of these authorities. 302.3 thousand people were employed at the positions of municipal service (64% of the total number of employees in municipal authorities) (Rosstat, 'On the number and pay...', 2017). Thus, it can be said that public servants make up just over half of the state authorities' employees.

There is a large proportion of employees of other types of services in a number of federal state authorities providing security and law enforcement. For example, the number of workers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia is 894,871 people: 130.8 thousand employees, 17,199 have the status of federal public civil servants, and 746.9 thousand are officers – employees with special titles (Presidential Decree No. 652, 2017). These include, for example, police officers and officers of the State Inspection for Road Traffic Safety.

The number of employees of state and municipal authorities has increased by 1.85 times over the years (see Figure 1).

As already indicated above, the public service system includes the military service. By the time of the collapse of the USSR, the strength of the Soviet Armed Forces was 3.7-3.8 million, without the civilian personnel. The number of servicemen in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation had dropped to 2.1 million by 1994, and to 1.7 million by 1996 – by almost 40% compared to 1992.

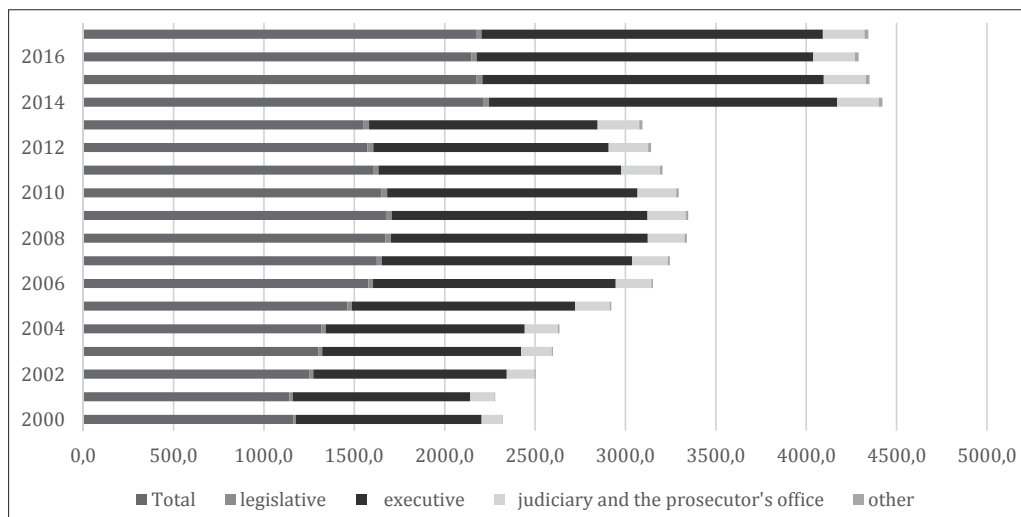


Figure 1: Dynamics of the number of public servants of state and municipal authorities in the Russian Federation

The change in the strength of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on January 1, 2017 was the eighth in a row since 1997 (Zhukovsky, 2018). Since January 1, 2018, the strength of the Armed Forces is 1,902.8 thousand people, which include 1,013.6 thousand servicemen (Presidential Decree No. 555, 2017) – the rest are civilian personnel.

4.3. Stratification of public servants of Russia by gender

For the past twenty years, the public service has maintained a gender asymmetry as most of the employees at state and municipal positions are men. Out of 31 positions in the Government of the Russian Federation, only 4 are occupied by women. As of June 2018, there were only 4 women among 85 governors of the Russian Federation subjects. There are 15,195 men and 6,786 women among heads of municipalities (Information and analytical materials on the development of local government in the Russian Federation, 2016-2017). Only the judicial authorities, where 2/3 of employees are women, are an exception to this rule (Volkov, 2015, p. 87).

Among public civil and municipal employees, the majority, more than 70%, are women, and their share is even greater in the municipal service; at the same time, men more often occupy higher positions, including managerial positions. Thus, in the municipal service, the ratio of men and women in positions of the higher group is 0.85:1, of the senior group – 0.18:1. In the civil service, the ratio of men and women in positions of the higher group is 1.46:1, of the senior group – 0.33:1.

In recent years, the number of women in military and other types of services has been increasing. Currently, more than 177 thousand women serve in the internal affairs authorities of the Russian Federation, which is about a quarter of employees. Over 143 thousand women are on the positions of middle and senior commanding

staff. Women prevail in units of inquiry, investigative, for work with personnel (official website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2018).

The number of women among servicemen, although growing, remains small. The modern Russian army has about 45,000 female contractors (Women in the Army of Russia, 2017), which is less than one percent of the total number of servicemen.

4.4. Stratification of public servants of Russia by education

The results of the research showed a high level of education of public servants as, on average in Russia, the level of higher education among the employees is 33%. Public servants have a much higher education level. There is a differentiation in the level of education among state and municipal employees due to differences in the legal requirements for holding certain types of positions. Educational qualification is not established for deputies of legislative (representative) authorities. The education requirements can be established for the heads of municipalities (if elected by the competitive commission). In 2017, 75.6% of the heads of municipalities of Russia had higher education (Information and analytical materials on the development of local government in the Russian Federation, 2016 – 2017). The judicial authorities are the most highly educated, since a law degree is a prerequisite for becoming a judge (RF Law No. 3132-1, 1992).

Civil and municipal servants have an above average higher education level for Russia. The share of civil servants with higher education is 94.2%, for municipal servants – 79.9%. Such a high level of education of employees is due to qualification requirements established by the law; higher education is compulsory for all groups of civil servants, except for the junior group, and for all groups of municipal servants, except for the junior and senior groups. For these groups, secondary vocational education is compulsory (Federal Law No. 79-FZ, 2004).

Education requirements are lower for military service and other types of service. For example, a citizen with a secondary general education may become a police officer or a contract serviceman.

4.5. Stratification of public servants of Russia by income level

Let us consider another criterion for the stratification of public servants – income. In general, salaries of employees in the sphere of public administration and security are above the average for Russia. The average monthly salary of public servants is ranked third or fourth among representatives of other economic activities in the country. It is comparable to the salary in the real-estate sphere, and is second only to the salary in the financial and mining sectors (Zaitseva and Kostina, 2018, p. 22).

Table 1 presents data on the average salary of certain categories of public servants in rubles and euros (at the exchange rate at the end of the year), as well as the ratio to the average salary of workers in Russia as a whole. As can be seen, salaries of public servants are basically equal to or above the national average.

Table 1: Average monthly salary of public servants in absolute and relative indicators

	Average monthly salary (RUB)	Average monthly salary (EUR)	Coefficient to the average wage, CAW
All employees in the Russian Federation	39,167	537	–
Deputies of the State Duma	399,300	5787	14.8
Judges	85,170	1,166	2.17
Public servants in the central apparatus of federal state authorities	118,800	1,627	3.03
Public servants in federal state authorities at the regional level	41,300	565.8	1.05
Public civil servants of the subjects of the Russian Federation	56,400	773	1.44
Public servants of military service	61,800	847	1.58
Police officers	40,000	579.7	1.02
Municipal employees	39,000	534	0.99

Undoubtedly, political employees are the most well-off financially. Salaries of the RF ministers are quite different – from 443 thousand rubles a month to 1.73 million rubles. Salaries of governors range from 70 thousand to 500 thousand rubles a month. The sum is determined by the deputies of the region, there are no general principles.

The highest salary level among civil and municipal employees belongs to the central apparatus of federal state authorities. The highest salaries are in the Government of the RF (227,267 rubles or 3,293.7 euros) and the Administration of the President of the RF (217,453 rubles or 3,151.5 euros), 68% of civil servants in federal state authorities have an average salary of more than one hundred thousand rubles (more than 1,450 euros).

There is an increasing wage gap between the central and territorial apparatus of federal authorities. In 2003, employees of territorial authorities received 80% of their colleagues' salaries in the central apparatus. By 2014, this share was reduced to 26%.

Analysis of the wages in 2016 showed that the average salary of civil servants of the subject of the Russian Federation in all regions (except Moscow) is higher than the average for the region. Salaries can be higher by 2 times (Orenburg region) and more (Khabarovsk region) (Zaitseva and Kostina, 2018, p. 22).

The situation is worse for municipal servants – their average salary is lower than the region average in 39 regions of the Russian Federation. At the same time, the wage gap varies almost eightfold – from 135,956 rubles, or 2,158 euros, in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District to 17,383 rubles, or 276 euros, in the Pskov region.

4.6. Self-identification of civil and municipal servants

Self-identification plays important role in determining the social status of the group. The assessment of financial well-being of public servants is constantly changing among the general population and the employees themselves.

According to the results of surveys conducted by Russian academy of public administration (RANEPA) (Bartsits, Borshchevskii and Magomedov, 2018, pp. 33-36), in 2006, a significant share of the population (almost a third of the respondents) and ex-

perts considered public servants a high-income category of workers. The assessments of the public servants' income worsened in 2012 and sharply increased again in 2017.

According to our research (described in Section 3 of the article) civil and municipal servants self-identify as the middle-income and high-income social strata of the population. In general, they estimate their financial situation as average (when the income is enough to cover only food and current purchases – 45.8%) and good (which, however, does not allow them to purchase an apartment or a car – 32.3%). Only 9% of respondents do not experience any financial difficulties. Almost the same share of respondents does not always have enough money for food – 9.8%.

In this situation, it seems surprising that the absolute majority of the respondents self-identify as the middle class – 86.5% (Kostina, Zaitseva and Bannykh, 2017). 2.1% of public servants self-identify as the higher class, while 40% of them assessed their financial situation as average. And it seems logical that those who ranked themselves in the lower class (11.3%) assessed their financial position as average (59.9%) and below average (37.7%).

If we consider the indicators of the middle class (the nature of labor, education, income, property), then only two of them are present in full among public servants – the mental nature of labor and the presence of higher education (in more than 90% of public servants, according to statistics).

5. Conclusions

For more than thirty years, the Russian society has experienced the transformation of the socialist state-administrative model into a new capitalist model compliant to the requirements of the European democratic principles of the constitutional and social state. These radical changes occurred in Russia after 1990 and led to a radical modernization of the entire administrative and political system of the country. The changes inevitably affected the sphere of the state administration and the order of formation and operation of the state apparatus.

In general, the modern structure of the state apparatus of Russia was formed by the mid-1990s in accordance with such principles of the state as democracy and federalism. This led to the separation of the state apparatus into levels (federal and subjects of the federation), branches of authority (legislative, administrative and judicial), and the establishment of local government authorities.

However, the inability to immediately depart from the state participation in various spheres of public life led to the need to form a complex branch structure of government authorities and to the growth in the number of personnel of state and municipal authorities. Further attempts to reduce the number of employees by outsourcing a number of functions of state authorities did not lead to a significant result. At the same time, the complex structure of the state apparatus created a high level of stratification of public administration personnel.

It can be noted that the construction and reform of the public service system in Russia proceeded in the spirit of the principles underlying the formation of the govern-

ment of the European Union, including the 'principles of the European administrative space' that were developed by the SIGMA program in the late 1990s (SIGMA, 1999). As a result, a rather complex system of public service was formed in Russia, which includes not only public servants themselves, but also municipal servants and employees holding state and municipal offices (not formally related to public servants). In accordance with the limited concept of the public service in the Russian Federation, only employees of the state apparatus, not of the state and municipal organizations, are considered to be public servants. At the same time, a part of the employees of state and municipal authorities with technical functions also formally do not belong to public servants. In turn, the public service is extremely differentiated – it is divided into types and levels, each of which has a fairly complex structure. The bulk of public servants are employees who hold rather low positions (senior group). In the analyzed group, employees of the military service, civil service and other services are represented in approximately equal parts (approximately 1 million people). Political employees, including persons holding state and municipal offices, constitute a much smaller group.

There is a significant gender asymmetry among public servants, the main factors of which are the scope of authority and the salary level. Although there is the predominance of women among employees in the state and municipal positions in general, men prevail in the highest positions of the public and municipal service. The exception is the military service, where the number of women remains insignificant regardless of the job hierarchy.

Public servants, without exaggeration, are the second most educated social and professional group in Russia, after scientific and academic staff. This situation is due to high requirements for the education level of public and municipal servants, as well as judges.

At the same time, public servants are significantly differentiated in terms of salaries – they can vary fifteen fold (between the salary of deputies of the State Duma and municipal servants). In general, the salary level of public servants is above average for the Russian Federation and is considerably higher than the salary level in similar sectors, such as education, social services and healthcare (Zaitseva, Kostina and Voronina, 2017, p. 537). Civil servants of the central apparatus of federal authorities and regions of the RF are in the most advantageous position, while municipal servants are in the worst. The salary level depends on the type of service (the average salary of public servants is higher than that of municipal servants), the level of the public-law entity, and the authority itself.

As a result, we can conclude that the group of public servants is fairly homogeneous in terms of its education level, but stratified by legal status, level of authority, gender, and income level. The causes of inequality are primarily due to the peculiarities of the state administration system in Russia, which is quite complex in nature, is distinguished by multi-level and hierarchical, relative autonomy of public legal entities in the organization of its public service (including the definition of wages). Secondly, the existing system of legal regulation in the framework of the limited concept

of the civil service resulted in a high degree of differentiation of the public service according to the formal status. Unfortunately, the administrative reforms carried out over the past two decades in Russia, the purpose of which was to equalize the position of employees of various types of service according to legal status, wage level, selection criteria for the service, etc., could not solve the problem of high inequality. In line with the European tradition, Russian reformers focused more on the issues of anti-corruption ethics, labor efficiency, openness, improvement of professionalism, development of e-government, etc. in relation to public service.

The results of the study helped to identify the main problems of the modern civil service system in Russia related to the status of public servants, their stratification and identification. To solve these problems, it is recommended to develop and verify the concept of public servant status (by type and level of public service), containing concepts, goals, functions, structure and other aspects of the development of public servant status. The concept can also resolve the issue of a more unified and transparent mechanism of salary for employees, as well as the issues of the 'glass ceiling' and stimulating career development. Only systematic efforts will help enhance its prestige and transparency and occupy a certain stable place in the system of employment, profession and life activity for the modern public servants.

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