

REGIONALISATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Alexey Barabashev¹

I. General Description of the Russian Civil Service Structure: Job Position Imbalances

Amongst all the countries of Eastern Europe, Russia represents maybe one of the most imbalanced due to its complex civil service system², which is quite difficult to manage.

Originally, the Russian civil service, from the beginning of the 1990s, consisted of a highly complicated system of groups and categories of job positions. It was reflected in the first Russian public service Law “About the Foundations of Public Service in the Russian Federation” (1995)ⁱ: the structure of civil servants’ job positions consists of categories A (political nominees); B, C (managerial levels); and 5 groups (professional levels). The combination of categories and groups gives the job positions - directly to Public Service attributed levels B and C, and all 5 groups of positions at levels B and C.

Later, with the present Russian public service legislation, this structure was transformed not towards simplification, but rather towards a more complicated system. According to the Civil Service Law (2004)ⁱⁱ, (public part) categories B and C were replaced by 4 categories of civil servants (managers, advisors, specialists and supplementary specialists). The groups remain the same. The combination of 4 categories and 5 groups creates certain job positions which vary from the highest level, as the highest managers (rukovoditel, glavnaya gruppa), to the lowest level as the youngest supplementary specialists (obespechivayuschij spetsialist, mladshaya gruppa).

¹ Professor at the Research University - Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

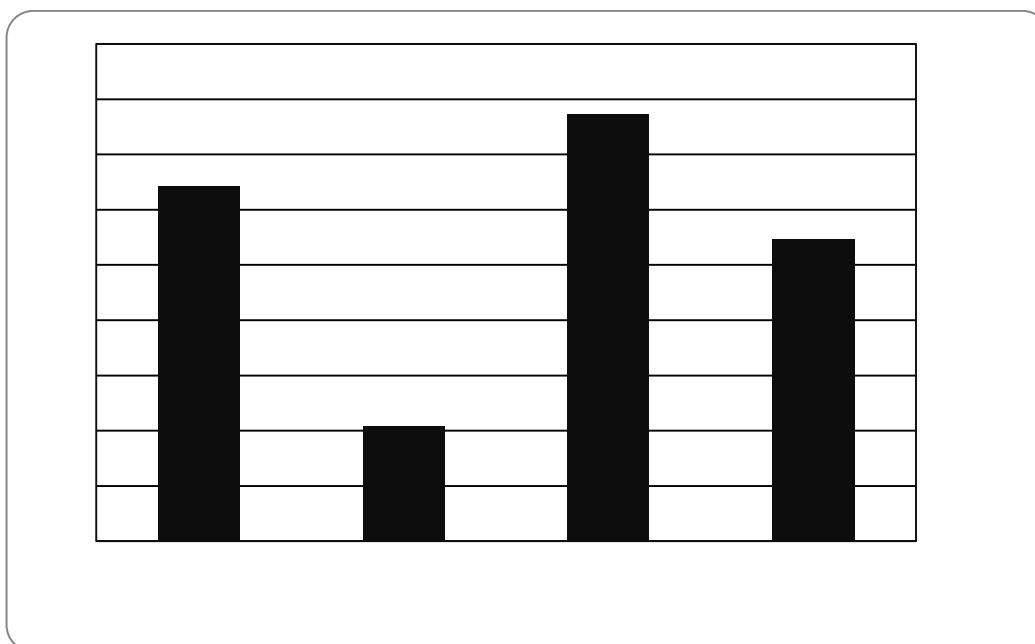
² Article, the results of the project “Human Resources in the State and Municipal Governance: Strategy and Technology of its Development”, under the Programme of the Scientific Research Foundation of HSE at 2013, grant No 13-05-0018, is presented.

Table 1:
Combinations of categories and groups of civil servants in Russia

Categories/ Groups	Highest Group (“Vyshchaya gruppа”)	High Group (“Glavnaya Gruppа”)	Leading Group (“Vedushchaya Gryppа”)	Senior Group (“Starshaya Gruppа”)	Youngest Group (Mladshaya Gruppа”)
Category “Managers” (“Rukovoditeli”)	+	+	+	Non-existent	Non-existent
Category “Advisors” (“Pomoshchniki/ (Sovetniki”)	+	+	+	Non-existent	Non-existent
Category “Specialists” (“specialisty”)	+	+	+	+	Non-existent
Category “Supplementary Specialists” (“Obespechivayushchie specialisty”)	Non-existent	+	+	+	+

The above Table shows only the pattern job positions of civil servants. This is the real picture of the diversity and heterogeneity of the job positions presented (for Federal civil servants) in the Decree of the President of Russia (2005)ⁱⁱⁱ that was issued the year after the new Federal Law about the civil service came into effect. It shows 1084 different job positions at different Federal governmental bodies which specify the initial pattern of job positions of civil servants.

Table 2:
Histogram of the positions at the Federal Civil Service of Russia



One can clearly see the imbalance of the number of positions in the Federal civil service: the number of managerial positions is close to the number of specialist job positions.

Russia has too many Federal state manager positions, a very limited number of Federal advisor positions and insufficient Federal specialists' job positions. It is the concentration of Federal governance at the top level that is reflected in the structure of the Federal civil service.

Within such a system of job positions, many *paradoxes of "top-down" subordination* exist. One example is the Head of the Department in the Administration of the President of Russia, who is responsible for the coordination of the activities of different departments with other Government bodies. He holds the position of specialist^{iv}, but the Heads and Deputy Heads of the Departments in Government bodies, who are under the control of the Administration of the President of Russia, have managerial level positions^v. This shows that the Russian civil service system, because of its over-complexity, has clear structural problems at the Federal level.

II. Federal and Regional Levels of the Russian Civil Service: their Complexity, Centralisation and Imbalances

Russia, as the Federal State, has not only the Federal civil service, but also the civil service at the territorial level. At present, Russia consists of 83 Regions (so-called Subjects of the Russian Federation), including 60 territorial Subjects (oblast'; kraj; autonomy oblast'; autonomy okrug), 21 National Republics, 2 Federal Cities (Moscow, Saint-Petersburg). Various kinds and branches of government bodies (departments or ministries, agencies, services for executive branch of power) are located at Federal and Regional levels. Amongst the Federal Ministries, which have the largest number of territorial branches, are included the Ministry of Finance (especially its Federal Tax Service Agency), the Ministry of Economic Development (especially, its Federal Agency for State Property Regulation). If one compares the Federal and Regional levels of the Russian civil service, it is evident there is a remarkable imbalance of the levels.

Statistical data clearly show the lack of balance in civil service size. We can see that the number of Federal level civil servants in Russia is much higher than at the Regional level, and also the over-centralised responsibility and functions distribution in the system of Russian governance.

Data in December, 2012 (Russian Federal Agency of Statistics report^{vi}) shows:

1075.4 thousand civil servants = Federal level of civil service + Regional level of civil service (civil service of the Subjects of the Russian Federation);

77% of all civil servants belong to the executive power;

813.3 thousand civil servants = Federal level of the civil service;

765 thousand = Federal civil servants, working at the territorial branches of Federal government bodies (94% of all Federal civil servants);

48.3 thousand civil servants = central apparatus of Federal government (5.9% of the overall number of Federal civil servants);

262.1 thousand civil servants = Regional level;

496.7 thousand municipal servants = municipal level, which is constitutionally not part of the civil service, but has a lot in common with the civil service in its legislation, and in its organisation.

We can see, that:

- 1) Over 75% of civil servants represent the executive power, i.e. ministries, agencies and services, at Federal and Regional levels. This means that the executive power in Russia statistically, in number, dominates legislative and judicial powers;
- 2) Only 24% of civil servants work at the Regional level and the remaining 76% work at the Federal level. This shows that the Russian Federal (mostly executive) power rules in the Regions (in the Subjects of RF) via its territorial branches;
- 3) The Federal civil service, imbalanced in size, consists of a relatively small central apparatus (5.9%) and numerous territorial branches of Federal bodies (94.1%). As a result, it is difficult for regional branches to operate from the Federal centre, due to the imbalance of the size of central and territorial branches. It is well-known that the departments of Federal bodies simply *have insufficient time* to work closely with the appropriate territorial branches belonging to the given Federal bodies. Federal regional branches or territorial bodies of Federal ministries (especially the territorial branches of the Ministry of Finance and its Agencies, the Ministry of Economic Development and its Agencies, Ministry of Labour and Social Development, and the Ministry of Healthcare) are for the most part “independent” as regards the implementation of their day-to-day duties from the Federal central executive apparatus.

III. To Decentralise or Continue the Centralisation of the Civil Service? Russian Decision

Theoretically, there are two possible existing methods to harmonise the system of the Russian civil service: to give more responsibilities to the Regional level of the civil service for the municipal level of service (this is the way forward for the democratisation of the civil and municipal service, and the tool for balanced decentralisation of power in Russia), or to construct at the Federal level some centralised *sub-Federal* civil service units (potentially – some “quasi-states”), which should help to reinforce the links between Federal power and the Regions.

To choose the first alternative, to reduce the number of federal servants and, at the same time, enlarge the number of regional civil servants and municipal servants, means shifting many areas of responsibility and decision-making from the Federal to Regional level. The “regionalist topic”^{vii} is being discussed in Russia because of the different opinions regarding the balance of civil service regionalisation covering both positive and negative outputs. Amongst the dangers for Russia’s existence were the negative “separatist” scenarios and the danger of regionalisation in Russia was very real during the middle and late 90s, when

some decisions regarding which direction to choose should have been made. Due to many factors (heterogeneous bureaucracy; depth of social inter-regional differences; differences in the mentality of neighbouring regions; so-called national republics and national autonomy districts' existence; tensions between “poor” and “rich” regions; internal labour migration from some regions to other Russian regions - so-called “othodnichestvo”; etc.), the periphery-driving forces in Russia were similar to the forces during the late Soviet Union period, when Soviet Republics broke up. Especially strong during the 90’s were the attitudes of the so-called “national republics” to obtain independence and the economic crisis in 1998-99. The Russian Federal authorities were afraid to “release the Genie from the lamp”, and as a result, at the beginning of the 2000’s they preferred less perspective but more empire-tradition for Russia, to strengthen the vertical-oriented system of civil service.

The special compensatory mechanism to foster the centralisation of the civil service was established at the beginning of Putin’s first presidency in 2000 (establishment of the new institution i.e. the Office of Representatives of the President of Russia in Federal Districts). This mechanism, proposed by President Putin, introduced seven (since 2010, eight: Central, North-West, South, North-Caucases, Volga, Urals, Siberia, and Far-East) Federal Districts, and established the positions of Federal Representatives in the Federal Districts with their apparatus, as part of the Administration of the President of Russia^{viii}.



A new sub-level of the Federal civil service, the Institute of Federal Representatives, was established to achieve the clear goal “to disperse” Federal power to the Regions, and to regulate in a centralised (unified) manner the process of territorial governance. Unfortunately, this goal was not achieved because of the intersection of Federal Representatives and their regulatory functions with the day-to-day functions of governance: the over-extended regulatory functions, which were developed at the Federal representatives’ offices, often blocked the operational activity of regional power. Permanent requests for data from the Administrations of the Subjects of the Russian Federation, numerous reports to the offices of the Federal Representatives, frequent coordination meetings for regional authorities ordered

by the Federal Representatives and by their staff, numerous audits of regional bodies' functions, checking of federal programmes' outcomes and expenditures, etc. became a common practice of interaction of the Federal Representatives' offices and the Administrations of the Subjects. The regional managerial activity, as many colleagues from the regional administrations expressed, was highly affected by the unprecedented regulatory structure, instead of being supported by the creative managerial activity of the Federal Representatives' offices. Later, during the next step, the Federal Representatives became the "federal corruption-hunting dogs", and anti-corruption policy became one of the main tools of its influence on regional power. It is now clear that this was the wrong way forward.

Should the Federal Representatives and their offices remain in the administrative structure of the Russian Federation? Has Russia now, after the period of the 90s, overrun the danger of regionalisation and is it ready to dismiss the Institution of Federal Representatives in the Subjects?

There is no clear answer to the above question. The institutional analysis shows that once established, the agency or any other government unit is extremely difficult, almost impossible, to close down. In practice, the Kaufman exploration of organisational death shows^{ix} that it is usually left to chance, to the political circumstances (such as change of administration), and mostly to the long process of resource reduction, and lack of ties with other organisations, etc.

The Federal Representative Offices' evolution in Russia shows that the "survival scheme" for government organisations works successfully in this case. To be established as a response to the danger of regionalisation, the Federal Representation, as the Federal Governance Institution, moves from coordination to audit functions, and towards concentrating mostly on the control regulatory activity (including anti-corruption measures control). It leaves some space for Federal Representatives Offices' survival long after the period of political instability.

At present, the Institution of Federal Representatives is trying once more to renew and strengthen its niche in the system of the Russian civil service, and to extend its areas of responsibility.

First, there is the participation of Federal Representatives Offices in the Federal HR management, namely at cadres reserve selection and training at the level of Federal Districts. Since 2011, Federal Representatives' offices have been actively participating in the programmes of cadres reserve policy, namely in the preparation of lists of Federal Districts cadres reserves. From now until the end of 2012, and also in 2013, the Federal Representatives' offices will attempt to start inter-regional cadres rotation (despite the fact that the Federal legislation regarding the conditions of such rotation is not yet ready)^x. Also, we can now see some new "local" approaches in the inter-regional short-term training of civil servants, which is guided in Federal Districts by the Federal Representatives' offices and

implemented mainly in the regional branches of the Academy of People Economy and Public Service (APES) under the President of Russia.

Second, for some Federal Representatives' Offices, one can see they are involved in a variety of projects and activities, such as homeland security issues (North Caucasian District, South District), complex multi-Subject Federal programme implementation (Winter Olympic Games – South District; Far East programme of complex economic and social development – Far East District and the Football World Cup preparation – at least 4 Federal Districts), etc.

Last, but not least, the Federal Representatives slowly became the top federal level authorities. They influence federal decisions more now than at the beginning of the last decade. Some of them became Governors of the Subjects of the Russian Federation and some moved to the top positions at the Federal bodies. This process clearly shows that the institution of Federal Representatives has spread its roots far beyond the Administration of the President of Russia, outgrown its initial goals, and has become a strong political and administrative force. From the positions of state structure evolutionary growth^{xi}, the institution of Federal Representatives and their Offices are easier to transform and convert their goals from the support of centralisation to other different goals, than close down the Federal Representatives institution.

Sources

1. Barabashev, A. 2013. *Evolutsia gosudarstvennoj sluzhby Rossii: itogi desyatiletija (2000-2010)*. (in Russian). Moscow, Publ. House of Higher School of Economics.
2. Biryukov, S. 2010. *Sovremennyy federalizm: problem issledovaniya I perspektivy razvitiya*. (in Russian). Journal "Regionologiya", No 70.
3. Barabashev, A.; Klimenko A. 2010. *Retrospektivnyj analiz osnovnykh napravlenij modernizatsii sistemy gosudarstvennogo upravleniya I gosudarstvennoj sluzhby*. (in Russian). – Journal "Voprosy gosudarstvennogo I munitsipal'nogo upravleniya", No 3.
4. Barabashev, A.; Krasnov M.; Zaytseva T.; Obolonsky A. 2009. *The Fate of Russian Officialdom: Fundamental Reform or Technical Improvements? Russian Bureaucracy and the State. Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin*», ed. be Don K. Rowney and Eugene Huskey. Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Gliglich-Zolotarjeva, M. 2009. *Teoriya I praktika federalizma: sistemnyj podhod*. (in Russian). Novosibirsk.
6. Cherkasov, K. 2008. *Voprosy pravovogo statusa glavnogo federal'nogo inspektora b federal'nogo inspektora apparata polnomochnogo predstavatelya Prezidenta Rossijskoj Federatsii v federal'nom okruge*. (in Russian). Journal "Gosudarstvennaya vlast' I mestonye samoupravleniye", No 4.
7. Barabashev, A.; Straussman J. 2007. *Russian Public Service and its Reform in Comparative Perspective*. Journal "Public Administration Review" (USA), Vol. 67, No 3.
8. Muzin A.; Gurban I. 2011. *Problemy otsenki chelovecheskogo kapitala v kontekste issledovaniya natsional'nogo bogatstva regionov Rossii*. (in Russian). – Journal "Ekonomika regiona", No 1.
9. Chackerian R. 1996. *Reorganization of State Governments: 1990-1985*. – Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 6, No1.
10. Kaufmann H. 1976. *Are Government Organization Immortal?* Washington DC: Brookings Institute.

ⁱ The Federal Law from July 31, 1995 "About the Foundations of Public Service in the Russian Federation" FZ-119, Articles 1, 6.

ⁱⁱ The Federal Law from July 27, 2004 "About the Civil Service in the Russian Federation" FZ-97, Article 9.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation from September 27, 2005 № 1131 "About the Ranking of Federal Civil Servants in the Russian Federation".

^{iv} The Decree № 1131, registration number of job positions: 01-3-1-043.

^v The Decree № 1131, registration numbers of job positions: 05-1-1-005, 05-1-1-009, 05-1-1-010, 05-1-2-013, 05-1-2-014, 05-1-2-015.

^{vi} Table “The Number of Civil Servants in Government Bodies and in Municipal Structures distributed according to the branches of Power and the Levels of Governance”, data on December 31, 2012. Revised on April 23, 2013.

http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/state/#

^{vii} Глигич-Золотарева М.В. *Теория и практика федерализма: системный подход* / научный редактор Н.М. Добрынин. Новосибирск, 2009; Багдасярян В.Э. *Проблемы региональной дезинтеграции как угроза российской государственности*// Проблемы государственной политики регионального развития России. М., 2008; Гаджиев, А.К. *Некоторые аспекты административно-правового статуса главных федеральных инспекторов аппаратов полномочных представителей Президента Российской Федерации в федеральных округах* / А. К. Гаджиев, К. В. Черкасов // Современное право. - 2013. - № 1; Мамонов В.В. *Государственный суверенитет и территориальная целостность — главные принципы современной российской государственности* // Государство и право. 2004. № 4; Безруков А.В. *Укрепление единства государственной власти Президентом России при проведении преобразований в системе федеративных отношений* // Научный ежегодник Института философии и права Уральского отделения Российской академии наук. 2012. Вып. 12.; Лексин И.В. *О правовых принципах и критериях в территориальном устройстве России и в его реформировании*// Государственное управление. Электронный вестник Выпуск № 40. Октябрь 2013 г. URL: http://e-journal.spa.msu.ru/vestnik/item/40_2013; Лексин И.В. *К вопросу о реформировании территориального устройства России* // Право и власть. 2001. № 1; Добрынин Н.М. *Российский федерализм: Становление, современное состояние и перспективы*. Новосибирск, 2005; Бутенко А.В. *К вопросу о современной модели российского федерализма* // Конституционное и муниципальное право. 2012. № 10; Мириханов Н. *Федерализм, многонациональность, государственность: Новый курс российской власти* // Федерализм. 2002. № 3.

^{viii} The Decree № 849 of the President of the Russian Federation from May 13, 2000 “About the Assigned Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Federal District”.

^{ix} Herbert Kaufmann, 1976. *Are Government Organisations Immortal?* Washington DC: Brookings Institute, p. 55. See also: Richard Chackerian. *Reorganisation of State Governments: 1990-1985*. – *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 6, No1, Jan 1996, p.25-46, where the author insists that it is better to talk about the reorganisation of organisations rather than their termination.

^x As an example, the Cadres Reserve at the beginning of 2012, at the Central Federal District, includes over 5000 civil servants from different Subjects of the RF belonging to this Federal District.

^{xi} Of course, in the case of political turmoil and instability, on the other hand, the institution of Federal Representatives will definitely be in the front row for termination.