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Evidence from large-scale list experiment.

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Abstract

Support for the government depends on the capacity of authorities to respond to the citizens' demand, tied to public service quality and incentives for lower and middle-level officials. We argue that cases of "good enough governance" may be found within the Russian system of public administration. Investigating the factors influencing carrier promotion of bureaucrats, we made a survey with a list experiment in one of the ordinary Russian regions. Results showed that personal performance was perceived as the top factor of career promotion, whereas personal connections were ranked lower. These meritocratic tendencies may have contributed to the resilience of the Russian economy in 2022-2023.

Keywords: bureaucracy, civil servant promotion; "good enough governance"

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Introduction

This paper contributes to the stream of literature on the role of bureaucracies in autocratic contexts. We explore one case of regional government in Russia to show that in autocratic regimes "islands of good enough governance" exist and they can influence the overall efficiency of public administration in the country. We contrast this with traditional perspective that casts autocratic bureaucracies as uniformly inefficient and corrupt.

Traditionally in academic and popular discourse there is a certain skepticism regarding the quality of the Russia's bureaucracy. Civil servants are believed to be corrupt, greedy, inefficient, and prone to misconduct. This negativity extends to both the entry-level and subsequent careers in the civil service. Regarding the entry-level one tends to hear about the «negative selection»: allegedly, mostly those who seek bribes want to enter the civil service. Bribery is then assumed to flourish at subsequent higher levels of the hierarchy. At the same time, recent studies of Gans-Morse et al (2021, 2022a, 2022b) did not confirm the «negative selection» hypothesis at the entry-level: one can observe that more honest and altruistically minded individuals aspire to work in the Russian civil service.

In this study, we extend the analysis to civil servants of the lower-to-middle level of the Russian regional bureaucracy and attempt to measure their perceptions of career promotion using a list experiment. Despite the predictions of the proponents of the negative selection and "bad governance" explanations, we argue that even in the environment that is overall rather negative, the "islands of good enough governance" can emerge by the initiative of advanced local and regional leaders. These leaders create conditions and incentives for the regional economy and regional bureaucracy and thus promote development in the otherwise hostile and stagnant contexts.

In our study we focus on one indication of standard approaches of good governance - the career opportunities for women in the bureaucratic hierarchy. There is evidence

suggesting that empowerment of women may have positive effects on political decision-making and processes in the civil service (Swamy et al., 2001). We use the case of one Russian region in which we know from anecdotal evidence that the new governor may, indeed, be categorized as a "benevolent". We then look at the effects on bureaucracy under his leadership, and particularly on the evidence of change in gender composition of the civil service at different levels of the bureaucracy.

It is important to note that despite the example of one region in this paper, evidence of such leadership and effective administration can be found in the history of other regions of Russia. One of the most visible cases is a Tatarstan Republic. Mintimer Shaymiev, who became the president of the republic in 1991, was able to create the sustainable regional governance model by the end of his term in 2009. The understanding of the specifics of the region, implemented in privatization schemes and mechanisms of corporate governance, allowed for the preservation of regional control over key assets and served as the foundation for an active industrial policy, primarily benefiting large operating enterprises. Shaimiev's competent policies and skillful coordination helped Tatarstan to fulfil its political and project commitments, which allowed the regional elite to gain the trust of the federal government under new political conditions after 2000. Despite several prerequisites, such as the existence of oil in the region, the leadership of Shaymiev may be highlighted as the more important determinant due to its impact on elite cohesion and the realization of successful economic and social policy (Yakovlev et al., 2020). The next president of the republic, Rustem Minnikhanov, who was appointed in 2010, has continued the successful development of the region, which is particularly noticeable in comparison with the republic of Bashkortostan, which had very similar preconditions to Tatarstan in this time: both republics have had very strong first presidents, who have been at the forefront of the 'sovereignisation' process in Russia; both regions are large, predominantly Muslim, home to closely related ethnic groups

who speak very similar languages and share many customs and traditions; both are industrialized and both depend on oil and petrochemical production (Sharafutdinova, 2015). However, the effective administration of Minnikhanov, who represented the Shamiev elite, led Tatarstan to continued economic growth and successful social and cultural policies, as the previous president continued to be influential in the area (Starodubcev, 2018). At the same time, the appointment of Rustem Khamitov as president of Bashkortostan ushered in a turbulent political era in the region. The new leader was opposed to the established elite in the region and at the same time was unaware of the peculiarities of the republic and its governance, as he was not a resident. This example shows the importance of good regional governance model and its impact on stability and development by comparing two initially similar regions.

The role of "good governance" was also pointed out from the analysis of the "success story" of the Voronezh region's management, which is largely due to the existence of special institutions for coordinating the interests of business and government (Starodubcev, 2018). Alexey Gordeev, who took office in 2009 after the crisis, has been able to find compromise solutions for economic policy and reduce social tensions in the region. By 2015, Voronezh's GRP has grown almost three times since 2009[1], and in 2017 the region took seventh place in the national investment climate rating[2].

One more example of high-quality leadership was presented in Belgorod: the region in the central black earth zone of Russia. Yevgeny Savchenko was regional governor until 2020, and his policy of combining significant intensification of large-scale industrial

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[1] Gross regional product. Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Voronezh region. Source: https://clck.ru/34tio9

[2] Voronezh region ranked seventh in the national ranking of investment climate. Source: https://clck.ru/34tisQ

agricultural production with the development of organic farming led to economic success and the 'Belgorod Miracle', which has been more broadly described in the previous research papers (Nikulin et al., 2017).

In the 2000s, Kaluga was also a successful Russian region, largely thanks to the management of Anatoly Artamonov (Zimin, 2010; Starodubcev, 2018). In 2006-2008, the region attracted major 'anchor' investors such as Volkswagen, Volvo Trucks, a joint venture between PSA Peugeot-Citroen and Mitsubishi, and Samsung Electronics. Moreover, the creation of production clusters in various fields (pharmaceuticals, agriculture, etc.) had also took place in Kaluga. Even the crisis of 2008-2009 did not interrupt the effectivess of Artamonov's economic policy.

Thus, there is some evidence of 'good governance' at the regional level, involving a number of Russian regions over different periods of time.

Our study attempts to draw a comparison between the Russian bureaucracy and bureaucracies that evolved in other non-democratic contexts. In particular, we draw a comparison to Singapore and China in which systems of meritocracy were established in the civil service. Singapore has been seen by many as an example of meritocracy in the civil service (Chua et al., 2022; Jones, 2016; Quah, 1996; Tan, 2008). The Chinese case has also been shown to have created a certain set of meritocratic criteria in the civil service (Chan, 2010; Lee & Schuler, 2020; Li & Gore, 2018). We attempt to compare Russia to these extensively studied examples and assess the incentives that have been created in the autocratic context.

We should stress that numerous studies in economics and political science considered state apparatus in Russia as corrupt and incompetent (i.e. Egorov & Sonin, 2011; Ledeneva, 2013; Gel'man, 2022 etc). This view was based on rather simple and convincing arguments. The centralized model of governance built in the 2000s assumed that all key decisions were

taken at the federal level and that local officials were primarily required to be executive and politically loyal, the main demonstration of which was to ensure "correct" results in parliamentary and presidential elections. For its part, the Kremlin was prepared to turn a blind eye to arbitrariness, corruption and incompetence at the local level; problems that arose were "washed away with money" as needed, thanks to budget revenues during the oil boom of the mid-2000s. But the situation began to change after the crisis of 2008-2009, when half the reserve fund was spent in one year, and it became clear that the resources of the federal center are by no means limitless. Regional governors started to be required to create more favorable conditions for doing business - with regular measurements of the results of inter-regional "competitions" within the framework of the National Rating of the Investment Climate conducted by the Agency of Strategic Initiatives[3].

The massive political protests of 2011-2012 were a new factor of pressure on the authorities. The protests were provoked by falsifications in the parliamentary elections, but the deeper cause of these protests was widespread dissatisfaction with the poor quality of public goods (health care, education, infrastructure, security) that the state is supposed to provide to citizens. Awareness of this in the Kremlin prompted the federal center to increase demands on the performance of local and regional authorities as well as relevant federal agencies. One example of this is the "May Decrees" of 2012, followed by the monitoring of the achievement of the indicators established by these decrees. As a result, since 2014, bureaucratic elites have been explicitly treated not only with the "carrot" (in the form of access to additional federal budget resources or career opportunities), but also with the "stick" - in the form of criminal cases based on the results of anti-corruption investigations. And while previously such criminal cases were usually initiated against mid-level officials, now

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[3] See https://asi.ru/government_officials/rating/

their victims are members of the higher ranks of the elite, including federal ministers and regional governors. In other words, we can say that as external and internal pressures intensified, officials at all levels began to demand not only loyalty, but also competence, including the ability to solve problems and achieve results in their area of responsibility with the available resources. Thus, the requirements for civil servants have shifted away from sole loyalty to some measure of efficiency and professionalism.

The paper has the following structure: in the next section a review of the relevant literature is presented followed by an explication of the institutional context of the Russian case (section 3). Theoretical framework is elaborated in section 4. Methodology, data and hypotheses are described in section 5. Results are presented in section 6 followed by a discussion (section 7) and conclusion (section 8).

Literature review

We draw on several key themes in the literature:

(1) The concept of "bad governance", bureaucratic selection, and the role of effective individual administrators in non-democratic contexts;

(2) Gender equality as an indicator of meritocratic governance;

(3) The role of women in governance and effects of broader female representation.

    (a) Greater intolerance for corruption

    (b) Higher administrative efficiency

Bad governance, bureaucratic selection, and individual effective leader

Previous studies tended to underscore the negative aspects of the Russian bureaucracy (Jaekel, 2017). Vladimir Gel'man even introduced the term "bad governance" to refer to the Russian technocracy (Gel'man, 2022). Egorov & Sonin proposed a model for explaining how

dictators sacrifice competence for loyalty among their subordinates and used Russia as an example of such process (Egorov & Sonin, 2011). Empirical studies have demonstrated that at the regional level career promotion of governors in Russia is not linked to their regions ' economic performance. Governors are not promoted on merit and "are not encouraged to show initiative in economic affairs and engage in economic policy experimentation" (Rochlitz et al., 2015). This is in contrast with China, where such a link has been shown to exist. A number of studies have found evidence fo the existence of positive selection in the Chinese bureaucracy (Jin et al., 2005; Li & Zhou, 2005; Maskin et al., 2000). These authors attributed it to interregional competition within the historical decentralized model of the Chinese regional government. Landry et al. have shown that loyalty is more important at the higher levels of Chinese bureaucracy, whereas at the lower levels competence plays a greater role (Landry et al., 2018). A comparison between Russia and China has been drawn in terms incentives in the bureaucratic hierarchies and shown that " in contrast to China, regional leaders in Russia are unlikely to be promoted for economic or social performance" (Rochlitz et al., 2015, p. 421).

On the whole previous studies on Russian bureaucracy mostly corroborate the "negative selection" hypothesis that predicts stagnation or even decline in the quality of governance. However, recently there has been a number of publications that identified positive changes in the cadre of civil servants in Russia (Detkova et al., 2021; Rogozin, 2017). It has been shown the young people willing to work in government in Russia demonstrate higher altruism and honesty in experimental setting and are also less prone to engage in corruption in experimental games (Gans-Morse et al., 2021, 2022a, 2022b). Therefore, both the negative and the positive selection hypotheses can be relevant for the study of Russian bureaucracy. Existing studies mostly provide evidence of these positive trends in the Russian bureaucracy, but to not attempt to link the to underlying causes. We

argue that this evidence may be explained by the need for greater competence in the face of limited resources the Kremlin faces.

In Russia there have been studies that focuses on the higher levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy, but there is almost or none of the studies that look at incentives at the bottom and the middle levels of the bureaucracy. A few studies relied on biographies to trace the career trajectories of top bureaucrats including city mayors, regional governors, federal ministers (Buckley et al., 2014; Remington et al., 2022; Rochlitz et al., 2015). To our knowledge where is only one study that explicitly used this framework to examine incentives of bottom and middle level bureaucrats and found some evidence for meritocracy at the regional level (Kalgin et al., 2019).

In a hierarchical system of governance as opposed to a democracy, any change is much more dependent on the personal characteristics of politicians or senior officials. In this context, the possibility of positive change in a poor institutional environment is often linked to the emergence of benevolent dictators.

Gender equality as an indicator of meritocratic governance

An important indicator of good intentions on the part of politicians or senior officials could be the introduction of meritocratic selection principles in the recruitment and further career development of lower and middle level officials. One manifestation of such a recruitment policy could be an increase in the proportion of women in the bureaucracy, especially at the upper levels.

In particular, numerous studies show that greater gender equality policies contribute to quality of governance. Björkdahl & Somun-Krupalija observe that "from the global to the local level, gender inequality is the most persistent and entrenched challenge to development" (Björkdahl & Somun-Krupalija, 2020). Protection of the rights of women has been seen as

one the marker of "good governance" (Al-Khaldi, 2014). Diven & Constantelos claim that "cross-national studies have linked improvements in gender equality with advances in economic and democratic outcomes" (Diven & Constantelos, 2015). In particular, it has been shown that gender equity had a positive effect on health outcomes during the Covid-19 pandemic (Leung et al., 2020). Mitra et al. demonstrate that gender equality is associated with increased economic growth, particularly in the context of developing countries (Mitra et al., 2015).

The effects of female representation in bureaucracies

Another stream of literature that is relevant for our study are the studies on "representative bureaucracy". This is burgeoning field, see (Kennedy et al., 2020) for a review from a feminist critical theory perspective. The key idea of this stream of literature is that bureaucrats will be making policy decisions that protect citizens 'interest if they themselves represent these citizens. Bradbury & Kellough summarize the postulates of the theory of representative bureaucracy: "the theory posits that the active representation of group interests occurs because individual bureaucrats reflect the views of those who share their demographic backgrounds" (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010, p.157). They provide a review of recent publications that give evidence of the importance of female representation for positive policy outcomes. In a recent meta-analysis, however, the authors argue that the theory of representative bureaucracy has been too narrow and only applied in a limited number of contexts (Bishu & Kennedy, 2019).

In this theoretical context, the Russian case is of interest because women are overrepresented in the civil service overall, but underrepresented at the higher levels of the hierarchy. The data show that the share of women in public service is about 71% in regional

authorities and about 76-77% in municipal governments. These values are quite stable in dynamics if we consider the tables from 2009 to 2019 (see Appendix A4-A5).

Female representation and intolerance for corruption.

Moreover, Detkova et al. (2021) demonstrated gender differences in tolerance for corruption: women were less tolerant and this intolerance intensified at higher levels of the hierarchy. Their study was based on a survey of government procurement agents (buyers). However, there has yet been no studies deliberately designed to survey bureaucrats of the lower and middle levels and analyzing factors that determine their promotions.

At the same time, gender difference s in governance, in particular in high public sector and management positions, have been partly highlighted by previous researchers. For instance, there is evidence that if women have a larger share of parliamentary seats and senior positions in the government bureaucracy, the real level of corruption tends to be lower (Swamy et al., 2001). Another popular work on this topic also finds a correlation between higher women's representation and lower level of corruption (Dollar et al., 2001).

However, some other studies criticized this approach and highlighted the role of different cultural factors of the country that are supposed to make gender differences (i.e. intolerance to corruption) not as universal (Alatas et al., 2009). Using data from Australia, India, Indonesia, and Singapore the authors show that a significant difference in behavior of men and women exists only in Australia, whereas in the other three countries it is not demonstrated that female participants are less likely to offer bribes and more likely to punish corruption than male respondents. Another recent study demonstrates the importance of cultural characteristics: researchers claim that the link between female participation in politics and level of corruption is not direct (Debski et al., 2018). Although their findings confirm the relationship between gender and corruption, it turns out to be mediated by a time-

invariant source of heterogeneity across countries (such as cultural, geographical, institutional features). The authors do not reject the relationship between gender and corruption itself: they argued about the directness of this link.

Nevertheless, some other researchers demonstrate the relationship between gender and corruption in the sample of transitional countries (Michailova & Melnykovska, 2009). Results show that the higher is the number of women in parliament, the less is the level of corruption in the country.

Female representation and administrative efficiency in bureaucracies.

Thus, to date, there have been many studies on the relationship between gender and attitudes toward corruption. Moreover, not only the decreasing level of corruption, but also other positive implications connected with women in politics and bureaucracy could be found. For instance, in previous research it has been argued that female ruling is associated with higher effectiveness of management. There is evidence that women show themselves better in organizational performance (Jacobson et al., 2010). Relying on data from the American State Administrator Project (includes information from different types of state agency leaders), researchers found that female bureaucrats spend less time on internal management and networking relationships than their male colleagues. At the same time, not only the difference in behavior but also the positive effect of women management can be seen in another paper dedicated to various leadership styles (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). The authors note the higher effectiveness of women's management. The scholars also claim that women face prejudices that make it harder for them than for men to demonstrate better performance in order to hold leadership positions. Authors of another work argue that passive representation leads to active representation (Keiser et al., 2002). The authors advocate the usefulness of more female bureaucrats in expanding the range of issues discussed.

Thus, women representativeness in senior positions of bureaucracy may have a positive effect on bureaucracy in several aspects, including intolerance to corruption and more effective management.

Our study is motivated by these recent findings. We extend the analysis of Detkova et al. (2021) by focusing on a broader notion of meritocracy. We explore the effects of gender differences and the differences in levels of the position: between lower-level civil servants and supervisors.

It is important to study this subgroup, because it gives a direct representation of the incentives structure among rank-and-file civil servants and not among specialized groups such as procurers as in Detkova et al. (2021) case.

In this paper we explore a specific region in the Russian Federation where a new official from the "new technocrats" was appointed governor in 2017[4]. We test how important personal connections and meritocratic factors are for career advancement according to the perceptions of lower and middle level public servants. We also explore the significance of gender for perceived criteria of career promotion. Gender differences are important because they may serve as a proxy for the incentive structure of the bureaucracy as a whole.

Institutional context

Public service system

State civil service in Russia is divided into the federal, regional, and municipal levels. In Russian regions, all of these levels are represented. Every level of state civil service includes

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[4] The review of new cadre policy initiated by Sergey Kirienko after his appointment to presidential administration in 2016 and related first of all to regional governors is provided by (Kolesnikov & Volkov, 2020) and by (Ivanov & Petrov, 2021).

political appointees and regular civil servants.

The overall data about the number of civils servants and their salaries in Russia is presented in the Table 1 below. It is noteworthy that approximately half of all bureaucrats in the regions are federal civil servants. Although they sometimes may contact citizens, their main duty is to ensure the enforcement of federal regulation by business and public entities as well as by regional and local authorities. At the same time, municipal and regional bureaucrats are involved in direct interaction with ordinary citizens, who turn to them when they have the need.

Table 1. Civil servants at regional and local levels, 2019*

	State civil (municipal) servants, thousands	Share of:		Average monthly salary of civil (municipal) servants; RUB thousands	Average monthly salary in the economy; RUB thousands
		Men	Women		
Regional authorities	203,8	26,7%	73,3%	69,4	
Municipal governments	296,1	20,0%	80,0%	45,5	47,9
Federal government agencies (regional branches)	484,5	24,6%	75,4%	49,9	

* Sources: https://clck.ru/33ZLBD; https://clck.ru/33ZLBZ ;

** Small businesses are excluded

In addition to salary, civil servants also have other fringe benefits from their work, as provided by law. For instance, they have social benefits and secure employment with promotions tied to experience in public service. Moreover, civil servants have the opportunity to qualify for an increased pension in connection with length of service. Such bonuses as

financial stability, safeness and social guarantees are one of the reasons why people decide to choose the career of civil servant.

Case of Novgorod

For the purposes of our analysis the Novgorod Oblast was chosen. It is the region located in the northwest of Russia, which includes the oldest cities of the country. One of them is Veliky Novgorod - the administrative center of the region. In 2020, the population of the Novgorod region was 582 thousand[5] (68-th place of Russian regions), of whom 224 thousand live in Veliky Novgorod[6]. The area of the Novgorod Oblast is 54,5 thousand km²: the region ranks 49th in the Russian Federation by this indicator.

On the one hand, Novgorod appears as a common region of European Russia. It is possible to look at demographic indicators and find the similarity of Novgorod Oblast to Russia as a whole (i.e., the percentage of the rural population, life expectancy, population density, etc[7]). These factors allow us to think of this region as one of the typical for Russian Federation. On the other hand, Novgorod also has its own peculiarities, connected with its historical past and curious history of governance nowadays.

Aforementioned peculiarities are the reasons why region was highlighted in the previous research. For instance, the historical features are referred in the paper where author tried to figure out what led in 1990s to Novgorod's success and Pskov's failure in the context of economic growth and social development nowadays, considering the past similarities of the territories (Petro, 2006). The scholar argued that the model of "cultural congruence",

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[5] Source: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/chisl_RF_01-01-2022_VPN-2020.xls

[6] Source: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/tab-5_VPN-2020.xlsx

[7] See Appendix A1–A3.

adopted by Novgorod, became more sustainable than the "cultural adjustment" model, used by Pskov.

Since 1991 the region has been headed by Mikhail Prusak. He was 31 years old at this time and represented a generation of new regional leaders with closer links to Russian president Boris Yeltsin. During the beginning of his reign, he took advantage of the access to Yeltsin, promoted the provision of benefits for Novgorod, and tried to attract foreign investment in the region, for which he initially gained fame (Zimin, 2010). In 1996, the foreign investments in Novgorod region exceeded 160 million dollars or 2,3% of all foreign investments in Russia while share of Novgorod region in total population of Russia was about 0,4%. In 1993 the amount of investment in the region was equal to zero (Petro, 2001).

However, in the 2000s the situation changed. Mikhail Prusak was not able to adapt to the new relations with the federal government and started to lose control of local politics (including control of organized crime in the region). The governor was apprehensive of Russian big business and did not cooperate with such companies, while foreign investments in Novgorod have also faded into the background (Zimin, 2010).

Mikhail Prusak was replaced in 2007 by Sergei Mitin, carrier federal official in the rank of deputy minister. In different times he worked at the ministry of economy, ministry of industry and science, ministry of agriculture. He was 56 years old at the time of appointment. With the appointment of Mitin to the governor's post, the crime groups were eliminated, but everything else in the region also came to a complete stagnation. In 2017, Mitin resigned before the end of the term of office and his place was taken by Andrei Nikitin, previously general director of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives. At the time of appointment, he was 37 years old and may be considered as representative of the 'new technocrats' generation in Russian civil service. After his appointment Novgorod oblast improved significantly positions in many federal rankings: for instance, in the National investment climate ranking

before 2019 Novgorod oblast was outside of top 20 and has risen to 7th as of 2021[8]. This suggests that it can be also expected positive changes in public service in the region after 2017.

Thus, the Novgorod Oblast is interesting in several ways. It combines the traits of a common European Russian region and an engaging governmental story. It is also worth mentioning that data about civil servants is quite difficult to access, whereas Novgorod Oblast's administration allowed make this research possible.

Theoretical framework

We explain the observed differences between men and women in their perception of criteria of promotion not from their innate qualities (one could say that women are inherently more results-oriented than men, for example), but rather as an effect of selection. Those who reach the higher levels of the hierarchy had to pass through layers of the bureaucratic hierarchy and this process filters out those who do not possess the required qualities of a supervisor, including their values, sincerity and job attitude. Thus, our findings do not tell us something about women or men, but rather they tell us something about the criteria for promotion in the Russian regional bureaucracy. Consequently, our study explores the atmosphere in one regional government in Russia and those stimuli and expectations that apply to the regional bureaucrats.

In his most known work, Max Weber explores the roots of «the spirit of capitalism» and locates them in the ethical code of certain protestant sects (Weber & Kalberg, 2013). In a much less cited short paper «The protestant sects and the spirit of capitalism» he describes the process by which a certain ethos is created. Protestant sects, according to Weber, have 3

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[8] Source: https://asi.ru/government_officials/rating/

filters or selection mechanisms: 1) self-selection, not everyone wants to become a sectarian, 2) selection according to strict criteria, not everyone is admitted into the sect, 3) righteous conduct, continuous adherence to the strict rules of the sect (Weber, 2021).

As a result of passing through these layers of selection one internalizes a certain ethos - an outlook or a system of values.

In our case we observe a similar mechanism: civil servants self-select into the bureaucracy, then they pass through different tests to rise in the hierarchy, and they need to continuously confirm their status by adhering to the dominant practices. Thus, we should see at the high levels of the hierarchy civil servants with a certain mindset, different from those at the bottom level.

The criteria of this selection are important. Under one set of criteria the best will rise to the top, under a different set - the worst. It has been widely believed that the Russian civil service operates under the conditions of the "negative selection": only the least able and most prone to corruption enter the civil service and then rise to the top. Vladimir Gel'man even introduced the term "bad governance" to speak about the Russian case (Gel'man, 2022). Thus, our default hypothesis was that of negative selection. However, taking into account other recent works, such as (Gans-Morse et al., 2021, 2022a, 2022b) we also test a positive selection hypothesis.

Research question: What is the incentive structure in the bureaucratic hierarchy of Russian regional civil servants as viewed through the perceived factors of career promotion of men and women?

Methodology and data

We assess the degree of meritocracy in bureaucratic hierarchy through the perception of factors of career promotion among lower and middle level officials. To this end we

conducted a large-scale survey among lower and middle level civil servants in Novgorod region. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions (and, particularly the question about personal connections), we used the list experiment in our survey. List experiment is a wide-known method for social scientists commonly used in recent decades for different sensitive questions (Bromberg et al., 2018; Comşa & Postelnicu, 2013; Kuklinski et al., 1997; Lax et al., 2016)

Instrument

We used a list experiment with 1 control group and 3 treatment groups. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the groups. They were presented with a question "How many factors are important for carrier promotion"? They were asked to indicate the number of factors, not concrete factors. This provided them with a certain safety as we could not tell for each respondent which of the factors they have indicated. In the three treatment groups the additional factors were: a) 'useful connections', b) 'personal effectiveness', c) 'work in a team'. See Appendix B for the questionnaire.

The third vignette (work in a team) was used for a different research question (involving different conceptualization of the role of social capital in civil servants' career), so it has also accounted for ¼ of the sample, but is not reported in this paper.

The experimental vignettes and direct questions on values are given in the Appendix B, the set of demographic questions included in the survey is standard.

We used the term personal effectiveness as a more familiar term for the civil servants. Here we aimed to capture what in the academic literature is called "competence". However, the term "competence" is rather vague for the civil servants "on the ground". We, therefore, selected a more familiar term for them that had a similar meaning and could serve as a proxy for "competence".

In order to check for possible biases in the groups, we conducted a balance test (see Appendix C1). We found some biases in the "personal effectiveness" treatment group and ran several regressions to check it. Due to the age and experience variables are both categorical, it would be incorrect to include them in one model because they correlate with each other. Thus, we ran two groups of models to test for significant biases in the group of respondents with the "personal effectiveness" treatment, which show no significant bias (see Appendix C2–C3).

Data

Data have been collected using an online survey in Qualtrics in June 2021 in Novgorod region. We collected 1860 responses: 75% of all regional and 88% of all municipal civil servants.

Sampling

The sample includes regional and municipal civil servants. Since their responsibilities and work purposes differ, it is necessary to analyze their behavior and motivation separately. In our study, we do not focus on politicians and pay attention to the regular civil service in order to capture their career orienteers. Thus, our survey deliberately omits the category of political appointees. The following procedures have been used in sampling:

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

(2) Personnel managers of respective authorities distributed the link in their organization among the employees;

(3) Participants took part in the online survey

(4) Answers were recorded and stored on the researcher 'server.

Administrative survey implementation

The survey was administered in that has recently been called the «administrative survey» way. On-line links were generated and sent to HR specialists in the target public organizations. They were given an order from the governor to conduct the survey at their organizations. Two weekly reminders were sent to HR specialists and then another reminder was sent to those organizations that demonstrated low response rate. We realize the limitations of this approach and have attempted to address them in project implementation. This is discussed in more detail in the Limitation section. The advantage of this approach is the opportunity to collect a large sample of a hard-to-reach population. The disadvantage, however, is the potential danger of receiving biased results with high desirability bias and inattention.

We included all municipalities and all regional government authorities of Novgorod oblast except for registry office. Due to the support of the governor, we were able to achieve nearly universal coverage. The response rate varied across organizations between 65% and 100%.

Hypotheses

Specialist and supervisors

In our explanations we conceptualize the path of career promotion as a process of selection. This selection appears to be stricter for women, than for men. Almost half of the men in our sample of civil servants occupy senior positions, whereas only a little over one-quarter of women are supervisors. There are significantly more women in the workforce, yet in the

senior positions, they are less represented. In our conceptualization, this is seen as a sign of a much stricter selection for women than for men.

The key hypotheses that we test relate to the effects of career selection on perceived factors of promotion. We test both the positive and the negative selection hypotheses:

- $H1_a$ (negative selection): Supervisors rank result-orientedness lower than lower-level employees, whilst ranking useful connections higher;
- $H1_b$ (positive selection): Supervisors rank result-orientedness higher than lower-level employees, whilst ranking useful connections lower.

Gender differences

The difference between men and women may result from the selection that they are facing. Women need to pass through a much «finer filter» to reach the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Thus, for them, the «cost» of their position is much higher and they perceive it as more valuable. As a result, their choices may differ from those of men, because of a different cost-benefit analysis. Women have to work harder to achieve higher positions and thus, should value them more. This explanation is in line with the findings by (Detkova et al., 2021) who found that female respondents are more likely to see corruption as a problem in public procurement.

According to this conceptualization, we are observing two types of selection, and one is stricter than the other. For men, the selection is relatively loose, whereas for women it is much stricter. The selection effects, thus, should be more pronounced for women. And it will be pronounced among supervisor who had to go through greater selection. Selection happens at several points. First, is the selection at the entry level and then there is selection between the lower and the higher levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy.

We also assume that "useful connection" will be less highly ranked by women than by men. The "useful connections" factor is a proxy for the negative selection. Thus, when it is not ranked high, the negative selection hypothesis is rejected.

We formulate the hypothesis with the «benevolent» view of the selection in bureaucracy, in line with the findings of Detkova et al (2021), and Gans-Morse et al. (2021, 2022a, 2022b)

- H2a: Women rank result-orientedness higher than men.
- H2b: Women rank useful connections lower than men.

Gender and position

To test the hypothesis of two types of selection (for males and females) we further disaggregated data to see the rankings for specialists and supervisors of the two genders. The selection effect is assessed through comparison between specialists and supervisors and the comparison between males and females indicates the comparative effects of the different selection strictness. If we assume meritocratic selection mechanisms to be in place, the difference between male and female supervisors and subordinates will allow us to characterize the incentive structure in the bureaucratic hierarchy.

Results

As Table 2 shows in control group respondents in average selected 2,419 out of 4 items included in the question. In TG1 and TG2 they selected on average 2,923 and 3,002 out of 5 proposed items. In accordance with the interpretation of survey experiment results, we can say that 50,4% of public servants in Novgorod region consider 'useful connections' as an important factor for carrier promotion. At the same time 'personal effectiveness' was evaluated as an important factor by 58,3% of public servants. The significance of 'useful

connections' is not unexpected: it confirms the importance of personal ties in non-democratic contexts. However, we show that personal effectiveness is highly important that points at the possibility of meritocratic selection.

Table 2. Overall experiment results

	Control	Treatment	
		TG1: *Useful connections*	**TG2:** *Personal effectiveness*
Mean	2,419	2,923	3,002
Effect		0,504	0,583
p-value		0,000	0,000
N	420	470	456

We find that our positive selection hypothesis is supported: supervisors do rank personal effectiveness as a more important factor of promotion than do subordinates (see Table 3). At the same time the negative selection hypothesis is not supported - there is no statistical significance for the model with useful connections as the dependent variable. We conclude that there is support for the positive selection in the hierarchy.

Table 3. Specialists and Supervisors

	Dependent variable:	
	Response	
	Useful connections	Personal effectiveness
Treatment	0.495[***]	0.444[***]
	(0.082)	(0.088)
Supervisor (1 - yes)	-0.106	-0.106
	(0.106)	(0.112)
Treatment x Supervisor (1 - yes)	-0.024	0.370[**]
	(0.147)	(0.154)

Constant	2.465***	2.465***
	(0.060)	(0.063)
Observations	882	862
R^2	0.059	0.074
Adjusted R^2	0.055	0.071
Note:		$^*p<0.1;$ $^{**}p<0.05;$ $^{***}p<0.01$

In line with existing literature, we sought to find gender differences in ranking of promotion criteria. We expected women overall to rank results-orientedness higher than men. However, our results show that this hypothesis is not supported. There is no statistically significant difference between men and women overall in ranking of career promotion factors. However, in line with our conceptualization we assessed the differences between males and females in different positions, and results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Women and men

	Dependent variable:	
	The quantity of chosen factors	
	Useful connections	Personal effectiveness
Treatment	0.691***	0.617***
	(0.199)	(0.190)
Gender (1 = female)	0.057	0.057
	(0.147)	(0.156)
Treatment x Gender (1 = female)	-0.213	-0.044
	(0.212)	(0.205)

Constant	2.370^{***}	2.370^{***}
	(0.137)	(0.145)
Observations	885	869
R^2	0.059	0.069
Adjusted R^2	0.056	0.065
Note:		$^{*}p<0.1; \,^{**}p<0.05; \,^{***}p<0.01$

When looking at the difference between male and female-supervisors and lower civil servants, we found that women-supervisors are more result oriented than women specialists, whereas men-supervisors are not significantly differ in this question relative to men specialists[9]. This corresponds to the positive selection hypothesis (see Table 5 below). At the same time, we found that the negative selection hypothesis is not corroborated - neither male, nor female supervisors rank personal connections higher than subordinates. Male supervisors even rank it significantly lower. We thus have obtained evidence for positive selection among female civil servants and demonstrated that there is no evidence for the negative selection hypothesis.

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[9] We acknowledge the possibility that low small size can lead to insignificant result due to low power of the test, however the share of men is much lower than the share of women on the civil service.

Table 5. Gender and position division, effectiveness

	Dependent variable:	
	The quantity of chosen factors	
	Women	Men
Treatment (Personal Effectiveness)	0.427***	0.600**
	(0.093)	(0.279)
Supervisor (1 = yes)	-0.129	0.029
	(0.123)	(0.298)
Treatment x Supervisor (1 = yes)	0.477***	-0.054
	(0.172)	(0.387)
Constant	2.469***	2.400***
	(0.066)	(0.217)
Observations	731	130
R^2	0.079	0.065
Adjusted R^2	0.075	0.043
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 6. Gender and position division, connections

	Dependent variable:	
	The quantity of chosen factors	
	Women	Men
Treatment (Useful connections)	0.454***	0.957***
	(0.087)	(0.226)

Supervisor (1 = yes)	-0.129	0.029
	(0.120)	(0.226)
Treatment x Supervisor (1 = yes)	0.065	-0.719**
	(0.163)	(0.327)
Constant	2.469***	2.400***
	(0.064)	(0.164)
Observations	778	102
R^2	0.052	0.199
Adjusted R^2	0.048	0.174
Note:	$^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$	

Results in Table 6 show that women and men differ at the lower level of the hierarchy in terms of their perceived factors of career promotion and that there is a difference between supervisors and superiors for men. We assume that this difference is due to the results of the first entry-level selection. Women come to the civil service with more result-oriented expectations than men. Men come with more opportunistic expectations and at the lower levels tend to rank useful connections higher.

We see that female supervisors do not differ from female subordinates, but male subordinates rank useful connections higher then male supervisors. This allows us to characterize the system as having meritocratic criteria of hierarchic selection.

We also show that males are more opportunistic by comparing the experimental question and the direct question on values (see Table 7). The respondents were asked what in their opinion is the greater source of success: hard work or luck and connections. For our purposes, variable of direct question about success was recoded (see full wording of this

question in Appendix B). We took answers from 6 to 10 and created dummy «luck and connections» (1 – yes, 0 - no) for comparison with experimental «useful connections». We compare the results of this question with experimental question and show that for women the difference is much lower than for men.

Table 7. Direct and experimental question

	Women	Men
	Useful connections	
Direct question (share)	0,449	0,350
Experiment (effect)	0,478	0,691
Difference significant at p < 0.1	No	**Yes**

For men we see a significant gap between the direct and the experimental questions suggesting that they were more dishonest/opportunistic when answering the direct question.

Discussion

Our empirical results show some shifts to meritocratic appointment and promotion of officials in Russian public service. These results are in line with other recent studies which demonstrated increased efficiency of civil bureaucracy in Russia. However, the peculiarity of the Russian case appears to be in the fact that increased efficiency was not an intended goal of the Kremlin. It was rather a "side-effect" of the actions aimed to secure the survivability of the regime. Unlike in countries like Singapore and, to some extent, China, where reforms explicitly were aimed at improving bureaucratic efficiency and introduced "from the top", in Russia changed incentives came as "by-product" of measures that stabilized the regime.

Limitations and alternative explanations

Our results may be influenced by social desirability despite the fact that we used the list experiment method. It is possible that respondents nonetheless understood that they are being

asked something provocative and distorted their answers to fit the socially desirable expectations. These distortions of social desirability may be stronger for upper-level employees because they already have passed through a certain selection. One does not become a minister if one is too honest and cannot produce socially desirable narratives. Thus, it may be that the upper-level employees are more sensitive to the provocative nature of the question and thus distort their answers stronger so that we see that they rank socially desirable options higher.

It is possible that this effect of social desirability is more pronounced for women. This is linked to our argument about the stricter selection criteria for women (because there are more women overall and fewer women-supervisors).

Upper-level employees may develop higher cynicism and deliberately produce socially desirable answers. In fact, it may be one of the criteria for their selection into the upper levels of the bureaucracy. Those who are too honest, remain at the lower levels.

Limitations of administrative survey relate the survey implementation. It was carried out with the help the HR departments of the regional government. It was sent out by the HRs to their respective workforce and reminders were sent to encourage participation. Such a setting is potentially problematic as the respondents may be uncooperative, level of inattention may be high and responses may be biased towards socially desirable results.

Despite these potential limitations, we believe that our results reflect the underlying dynamics of bureaucratic hierarchy selection as accurately as is possible. We have been able to access a sample of regional civil servants and sample the nearly the whole population of bureaucrats in one of Russia's regions.

Discrimination and self-selection

The uneven distribution of men and women between lower and upper levels of the hierarchy

points at some discrimination against women. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that the Russian civil service is an heir of the Soviet system in which women were endowed with significant labor rights. The Soviet Union was the world leader in terms of emancipation of women, introduction of universal suffrage (albeit only nominal), maternity leave and even rights for work for women. Thus, the Russian civil service has the legacy of "affirmative action" towards women. Despite the fact that women are mostly taking up the lower-level positions in the bureaucracy, there is still a high number of female supervisors.

We need to acknowledge that these gender differences may in part be the result of self-selection: women may be more likely to prefer the lower levels of bureaucracy from the start. These positions may offer better work-life balance, greater stability and predictability of employment. It may be that male candidates do not apply for these positions as they may find the career prospects unattractive. The "glass ceiling" for women in the Russian public sector has been discussed previously. Isupova and Utkina find that young women in the civil service do not aim for the highest positions in the hierarchy because they find these jobs too "masculine" and offering poor work-life balance (Isupova & Utkina, 2018). At the same time, career-oriented women report that they find the demands of their jobs conflicting with their preferences for childbirth. They have to postpone having children until later age as they feel that child rearing would prevent them from working fully actively (Isupova & Utkina, 2016, p. 201). Thus, we may conclude that the less career-oriented women self-select into the lower levels of the bureaucracy where they may have their preferred work-life balance.

Policy implications

Our study contributes to the literature on the importance of gender equality in the workforce. Currently, women face stricter selection criteria and internalize the "ethos of result-orientedness" to a greater extent. Thus, promoting gender equality and affirmative action

could result in higher quality governance. Women who have passed the strict selection and internalized the values of result-orientedness could bring higher competence to the civil service. This effect, however, is likely to be transitory. In case, the gender equality is approached or achieved, the selection criteria would cease to be stricter for women and they no longer would be the bearers of the ethos greater of result-orientedness. However, this point is hard to be reached and it is likely that significant benefits may be produced on the path to it. We, therefore, advocate for greater representation of women in the higher levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy and view this as an indicator of better governance.

Detkova et al. (2021) reports higher negative attitude towards corruption among female bureaucrats and suggests that one of measures of fighting corruption may be the promotion of women to higher positions. This recommendation was based on a limited sample of public procurers, we extend it to a more general sample of civil servants. We show that not only the negative attitude to corruption, but overall, a meritocratic attitude to work may be more exhibited by female bureaucrats. Thus, we support the recommendations of Detkova et al, (2021) with our findings.

Conclusion

Our survey was unique as we were able to survey almost an entire workforce of one of the regional governments - a population that is notoriously hard to reach. We applied the method of survey experiment to assess perceptions of promotion criteria by civil servants. Our experiments showed that the factor of "useful connections" certainly matters, but we found that personal effectiveness is perceived as a more important factor by the superiors and more so by female superiors. At the same time, we did not find support for the negative selection hypothesis in our sample. We thus argue for the existence of certain positive selection mechanism in this region of Russia. More generally, we believe that experience of Novgorod

region can demonstrate the introduction of "good enough governance" in the Russian system of public administration and the existence of such "pockets of efficiency" promoting meritocratic selection in Russia's regional governance. Russia's bureaucracy may be structurally sounder than it is predicted by the proponents of the "bad governance" concept.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of interest statemen

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Appendix A. Additional data for Novgorod region

Table A1. Life expectancy, 2019-2021

Life expectancy				
		2019	**2020**	**2021**
Russian federation	**Women**	78,17	76,43	74,51
	Men	68,24	66,49	65,51
	All population	73,34	71,54	70,06
Novgorod region	**Women**	76,42	75,37	72,8
	Men	64,51	63,77	62,48
	All population	70,52	69,59	67,64
Source: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31293#				

Table A2. Population, 2022

Estimate of the permanent population by the regions of Russian Federation (01.01.2022)		
	Urban population, %	Rural population, %
Russian Federation	74,81	25,19
Novgorod region	71,86	28,14
Source: https://rosstat.gov.ru/compendium/document/13282		

Table A3. Population density

Population density by the regions of Russian Federation			
	Density, population/km^2	Total population	Area, km^2
Russian Federation	8,59	147182123	17125191
Novgorod region	10,70	583387	54501
Sources: https://clck.ru/y6ELv; https://clck.ru/V82r5.			

Table A4. Composition of Regional Service Personnel by Gender, Category, and Group of Positions

Russian data								
Bodies of executive power of regions of the Russian Federation								
	Total employees, number	*Including*		*in %*				
		men	*women*	*to the total number*			*of the total number of position*	
				total	*including*		*men*	*women*
					men	*women*		
October 1, 2009								
State and civil service positions of the regions of the Russian Federation – total	**195106**	**56150**	**138956**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**28,8**	**71,2**
State positions of the regions	1385	1192	193	0,7	2,1	0,1	86,1	13,9
State civil service positions - total:	193721	54958	138763	99,3	97,9	99,9	28,4	71,6
Supervisors (all)	45767	19019	26748	23,63%	9,82%	13,81%	41,56%	58,44%
Subordinates (all)	147954	35939	112015	76,37%	18,55%	57,82%	24,29%	75,71%
October 1, 2019								
State and civil service positions of the regions of the Russian Federation – total	167622	49054	118568	100	100	100	29,3	70,7
State positions of the regions	1734	1340	394	1	2,7	0,3	77,3	22,7
State civil service positions - total:	165888	47714	118174	99	97,3	99,7	28,8	71,2
Supervisors (all)	43709	17384	26325	26,35%	10,48%	15,87%	39,77%	60,23%
Subordinates (all)	122179	30330	91849	73,65%	18,28%	55,37%	24,82%	75,18%
Survey data – regional level. June, 2021								
	Total employees, number	*Including*		*in %*				
		men	*women*	*to the total number*			*of the total number of position*	
				total	*including*		*men*	*women*
					men	*women*		
All sample	**411**	**95**	**316**	**100,00%**			**23,11%**	**76,89%**
Supervisors	143	42	101	34,79%	10,22%	24,57%	29,37%	70,63%
Subordinates	268	53	215	65,21%	12,90%	52,31%	19,78%	80,22%

Table A5. Composition of Municipal Service Personnel by Gender, Category, and Group of Positions

	Total employees, number	including		in %				
Russian data								
1 October 2009								
	Total employees, number	*men*	*women*	*to positions of municipal service*			*of the total number of position*	
				total	*including*		*men*	*women*
					men	*women*		
Bodies of local self-government - total								
All municipal posts and positions of municipal service	**364903**	**89218**	**275685**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**24,40%**	**75,60%**
Municipal positions	23229	16194	7035	6,40%	18,20%	2,60%	69,70%	30,30%
Municipal service positions - total	341674	73024	268650	93,60%	81,80%	97,40%	21,40%	78,60%
Supervisors	71005	27166	43839	20,78%	7,95%	12,83%	38,26%	61,74%
Subordinates	270669	45858	224811	79,22%	13,42%	65,80%	16,94%	83,06%
1 October 2019								
All municipal posts and positions of municipal service	**317740**	**72652**	**245088**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**22,90%**	**77,10%**
Municipal positions	19519	13010	6509	6,10%	17,90%	2,70%	66,70%	33,40%
Municipal service positions - total	298221	59642	238579	93,90%	82,10%	97,30%	20,00%	80,00%
Supervisors	68117	23725	44392	22,84%	7,96%	14,89%	34,83%	65,17%
Subordinates	230104	35917	194187	77,16%	12,04%	65,12%	15,61%	84,39%
Survey data – municipal level. June, 2021								
	Total employees, number	*men*	*women*	*to the total number*			*of the total number of position*	
				total	*including*		*men*	*women*
					men	*women*		
All sample	**1393**	**149**	**1244**	**100,00%**			**10,70%**	**89,30%**
Supervisors	453	83	370	32,52%	5,96%	26,56%	18,32%	81,68%
Subordinates	940	66	874	67,48%	4,74%	62,74%	7,02%	92,98%

Appendix B. Questionnaire excerpt

Experiment

In your opinion, how many of the following factors are important for an employee's career advancement in your government agency (local government agency)? Check one number on the line below the list. (Please note, this question is about the NUMBER of factors, not about which ones are most important.)

Control group	Experiment 1	Experiment 2	Experiment 3
• Age • Length of service • Professional knowledge and skills • Sporting achievement	• Age • Length of service • Professional knowledge and skills • Sporting achievement • **Prevalence of useful connections**	• Age • Length of service • Professional knowledge and skills • Sporting achievement • **Ability to work in a team**	• Age • Length of service • Professional knowledge and skills • Sporting achievement • **Personal effectiveness**
0 _ 1 _ 2 _ 3 _ 4	0 _1 _2 _3 _4 _5	0 _ 1 _ 2 _ 3 _ 4 _ 5	0 _1 _2 _3 _4 _5

Values questions

Below several scales with different statements about worldviews are depicted. Please give your score on each of the scales.

Where would you place your opinion on this scale? (specify one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Hard work usually leads to success

Hard work usually does not bring success, rather luck and connections lead to it

Where would you place your opinion on this scale? (specify one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The state should be responsible for providing the basic needs of citizens

Citizens should be responsible for providing their own basic needs

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, how much does the future of our country depend on the actions of ordinary citizens?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The future of our country does not depend at all on the actions of ordinary citizens

The future of our country largely depends on the actions of ordinary citizens

Appendix C. Balance test and regressions

In order to check for possible biases in the groups, we conducted a balance test (see Appendix C1). We found some biases in the "personal effectiveness" treatment group and ran several regressions to check it. Due to the age and experience variables are both categorical, it would be incorrect to include them in one model because they correlate with each other. Thus, we ran two groups of models to test for significant biases in the group of respondents with the "personal effectiveness" treatment, which show no significant bias (see Appendix C2–C3).

Table C1. Balance tests

	Statistics by control and treatment groups						
	Control group	*Useful connections*			*Personal effectiveness*		
	Mean	*Mean*	*Difference*	*p.value*	*Mean*	*Difference*	*p.value*
Gender	0,13	0,10	0,02	0,25	0,17	-0,04	0,09
Age	3,94	3,85	0,09	0,20	3,89	0,04	0,53
Born in Novgorod	0,75	0,77	-0,02	0,54	0,75	0,00	0,91
Regional authorities	0,21	0,24	-0,03	0,32	0,26	-0,05	0,08
Attention (1 = yes)	0,40	0,41	-0,01	0,65	0,40	0,00	0,87
Exp: up to 5 years	0,25	0,24	0,01	0,77	0,23	0,01	0,68
Exp: 6-15 years	0,32	0,36	-0,03	0,29	0,39	-0,06	0,05
Exp: More than 15 years	0,43	0,41	0,02	0,45	0,38	0,05	0,12

Table C2. Treatment - personal effectiveness, experience included

	Dependent variable:					
	Response (Treatment – Personal effectiveness)					
Treatment	0.583***	0.589***	0.587***	0.588***	0.584***	0.631***
	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.096)	(0.079)	(0.085)	(0.140)
Gender (1 = male)		-0.061	-0.061	-0.064	-0.060	-0.065
		(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.133)	(0.105)	(0.105)
Regional authorities (1 = yes)		0.041	0.041	0.041	0.030	0.047
		(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.101)	(0.083)
Attention (1 = yes)		-0.304***	-0.306***	-0.304***	-0.304***	-0.306***
		(0.073)	(0.092)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.074)
Exp: 6-15 years		-0.225**	-0.225**	-0.225**	-0.226**	-0.124
		(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.118)
Exp: More than 15 years		-0.198**	-0.198**	-0.198**	-0.198**	-0.226**
		(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.110)
Treatment x Attention (1 = yes)			0.005			
			(0.147)			
Treatment x Gender (1 = male)				0.005		
				(0.201)		
Treatment x Regional authorities (1 = yes)					0.019	
					(0.159)	
Treatment x Exp: 6-15 years						-0.185
						(0.188)
Treatment x Exp: More than 15 years						0.058
						(0.181)
Intercept	2.419***	2.697***	2.698***	2.697***	2.700***	2.676***

	(0.044)	(0.085)	(0.089)	(0.084)	(0.087)	(0.098)
Observations	876	853	853	853	853	853
R^2	0.070	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.096
Adjusted R^2	0.069	0.087	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.088

Note: $^{*}p<0.1;\ ^{**}p<0.05;\ ^{***}p<0.01$

Table C3. Treatment - personal effectiveness, age included

	Dependent variable:					
	Response (Treatment - Personal effectiveness)					
Treatment	0.575***	0.582***	0.577***	0.582***	0.586***	0.588**
	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.095)	(0.078)	(0.085)	(0.250)
Gender (1 - male)		-0.066	-0.065	-0.064	-0.067	-0.062
		(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.133)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Regional authorities (1 - yes)		0.018	0.018	0.018	0.028	0.017
		(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.101)	(0.083)
Attention (1 - yes)		-0.288***	-0.295***	-0.288***	-0.288***	-0.288***
		(0.073)	(0.093)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.074)
31-40 years		0.098	0.098	0.098	0.099	0.128
		(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.173)
41-50 years		-0.128	-0.128	-0.128	-0.127	-0.115
		(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.170)
51-60 years		-0.041	-0.041	-0.041	-0.040	-0.090
		(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.174)
Over 60		-0.0002	-0.001	-0.0003	0.001	0.084
		(0.182)	(0.183)	(0.183)	(0.182)	(0.183)
Treatment x Attention (1 - yes)			0.013			
			(0.147)			
Treatment x Gender (1 - male)				-0.004		
				(0.202)		
Treatment x Regional authorities (1 - yes)					-0.018	
					(0.158)	
Treatment x 31-40 years						-0.054

						(0.284)
Treatment x 41-50 years						-0.026
						(0.282)
Treatment x 51-60 years						0.101
						(0.286)
Treatment x Over 60						-0.179
						(0.378)
Intercept	2.421***	2.564***	2.567***	2.564***	2.562***	2.561***
	(0.045)	(0.131)	(0.134)	(0.131)	(0.132)	(0.158)
Observations	867	859	859	859	859	859
R^2	0.068	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.094
Adjusted R^2	0.067	0.084	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.081

Note: $^{*}p<0.1;\ ^{**}p<0.05;\ ^{***}p<0.01$