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LIFE STRATEGIES OF CIVIL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES*

SUMMARY. This article discusses the main results of the dissertation research of the author on the study of the strategies of modern representatives of civil authority in the Tyumen Region. In Russia, one of the urgent tasks of public policy is to create a special layer of social and professional civil officials who can ensure high efficiency of the organs of state power at the federal and regional levels. The importance of the study is due to the role of state service in decision-making, the impact of which is distributed all over the country and influences all spheres of Russian society. The quality of management is predetermined by the personnel structure of the officials, their general knowledge, level of training, civil position and moral orientation. For appropriate management of government officials it is important to consider state employees' personal and professional qualities, namely values, motivation, perception of the future, the level of satisfaction, and most importantly life strategies of modern state officials.

KEY WORDS. Life strategies, state officials, officials, the Tyumen Region.

In modern conditions, one of the most important issues related to personality development is the question of designing one's own course of life. The choice of life course is important at all stages of human development. For schoolchildren it is a problem of self-identity, for students – self-determination, for representatives of socio-professional groups – life orientation.

Representatives of the group of civil servants studied by the author constantly face a difficult choice in their professional sphere. The issues of justice and fairness, rights and obligations, legal requirements and human concepts, corruption and personal interests do not make a complete list of items that people face in the public service sector as executors of public authority. In this regard, officials' life strategies are of particular interest.

Life orientation is traditionally viewed as a combination of various disciplines: sociology, psychology, pedagogy, social philosophy, social psychology, and social anthropology. Researchers usually use different terms to refer to the notion of people's future projections: *life plans, life goals, life strategies, life perspectives*. The terms

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are different, but the content reflects a person's conscious representation of their own future.

Studies of an individual life course in Russia began with the work of S.L. Rubinstein, who was the first Russian scholar to investigate an individual life course as an individual history. He viewed a person's life course not as a collection of life events, individual actions, or products, but as a holistic, continuous phenomenon [1, 643]. For L.V. Sokhan, a life program is a perfect image of all important objectives and results of an individual life [2, 199].

The studies of life strategies of individuals in the national literature were initiated and conducted by K.A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya. For her, life strategy is a constant alignment of one's personality (his/her peculiarities) with social environment and mode of life first on the basis of individual capabilities and natural talents given by birth, and then on the basis of those acquired during their lifetime [3, 67].

As noted above, the problem of life strategies is interdisciplinary. Most studies of life strategies are related to making typologies. The bases of these types differ according to the specifics of sociological and psychological approaches to life strategies. The essential characteristics of the sociological approach is that here a strategy is seen as an attribute of some social group, community, and it is focused on the disclosure of the tendencies in social development rather than on the study of an individual.

So, E.L. Omelchenko claims that life strategies are "series of informed choices made by an individual and based on the correlation of their chances with the current demand, as well as a tactical response to any changes in demand" [4, 37]. I.N. Tartakovskaya understands a "strategy" as an individual's conscious, reasonable behavior aimed at achieving life goals, realization of interests and values [5, 75].

The author of the article has adopted and broadened the concept of a personality's life strategies proposed and justified by E.A. Smirnov in collaboration with Yu.M. Reznik. The author employs these classifications to describe the typology of life strategies of Tyumen Region officials [6, 230]. For the researcher, life strategies of officials are dynamic systems of social and professional views of civil / public sector employees about their future personal and professional spheres of life guiding their daily behavior. This system is included in a wider system of personal activity and is an important part of a person's life orientation.

In order to construct a model of a state official's life course, one needs to work out criteria to refer this model to the identified types of strategies which are determined by state officials' values and attitudes in their professional and personal spheres. So, for officials, the focus on financial wellbeing is rooted in the predominance of values of a stable life leading to the feeling of confidence in their future. Officials' commitment to the strategy of success in life is characterized by the significance of values of career and professional growth. Dedication to work and desire for perfection characterize their inclination to self-realization strategy.

The author has added the strategy of adaptation to the typology of life strategies as a characteristic of modern state officials. The strategy of adaptation is characterized

by officials' uncertainty in their life goals, a lack of specific goals in the sphere of civil service. In many cases, they work in this sphere only as a result of having received relevant education, or because they found it easy to obtain their current positions. Another reason for their current employment in civil service is the so-called strategy of power / authority, i.e. desire for power, desire to enter the inner circle of those in power – elite public administration. The selected methodology and approach to life strategies analysis allow us to reveal social nature of the interaction of a subject with external environment. This methodology can also be used to analyze life orientation not only of an individual, but of socio-professional groups, such as state officials.

As part of the author's thesis, in the spring of 2011, the author carried out a sociological survey (in the form of a questionnaire), the goal of which was to identify a typology of life strategies of modern state officials of the Tyumen Region. To identify and to define life strategies of Tyumen officials, the author reviewed various aspects of professional and personal spheres of officials' activity. It was important to understand their age, financial, corporate, professional, and educational strategies, to see their values, ideals, and strategic plans, and to consider characteristics of each region (the Tyumen Region is a structurally complex subject of the Russian Federation, which, in addition to the South of the region, includes the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District – Yugra and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District).

The majority of officials (85.6 % of the respondents) view public service as “a professional service of government departments responsible for putting central government plans into action”. This definition can be compared to the interpretation which legally exists in article 3.1 of Federal Law № 79 *On the State Service System in the Russian Federation* [7]. 8.8% of the officials view public service as a “devotion to one's country and people”. Only 5.6% of the respondents assess civil service as “work providing a stable income and high social benefits”. However, M. Crozier believed that the bureaucratic system as a whole can be seen as a defensive structure, which is necessary for an individual (in this case an official) because of his/her vulnerability to social problems [8, 832].

Among the main motives officials distinguish welfare needs – a steady job (43.6%), where you can “earn a living” (37.0 %). It should be noted that the “southern” officials are largely motivated by the stability of service and “northern” – by the desire to make money. The above-mentioned motives are followed by the motivation to “realize one's potential” (30.9%) and “to gain experience” (26.8%), which make up the factors forming the strategy of Success. Less developed are the ideas of self-realization, namely “to work for public wellbeing” (21.9%) or “to serve the state” (17.3%). Being employed according to the received qualification (the adaptation strategy) motivates 37.5% of the respondents to work. Attention should be paid to the manifestations of motives of power among officials: 8.4% of the respondents want to work in a prestigious profession, 6.4% of the respondents establish useful contacts in government service, but only 1.8% of government officials achieve power.

The reasons for public service revenues also confirm the strategy of professional welfare of officials. “Stability” and “high social guarantees” attract 55.6% and 24.2

% of the respondents respectively (the welfare strategy). For 41.0% of the officials, the reason they have taken up the civil service is “their desire to realize their abilities, skills, talents”, and 24.4% of the respondents are “attracted to the profession by career opportunities” (the strategy of success). There is a certain tendency in the responses of officials from the autonomous areas: the farther it is from the administrative center, the higher is the proportion of value of success accompanied by the reduction in the percentage of material values.

Only 15.8% of the officials revealed “the need for self-actualization through service to their country and people”. It is noteworthy that a third of the respondents (32.5%) took up the civil service due to their qualification or comfortable working conditions (10.1%), which can be described in terms of the adaptation strategy. The proportion of officials following the strategy of power is not high: only 4.4% and 2.9% of the respondents seek to acquire useful connections or imperious power.

The analysis of the impact of certain factors on the choice of employment showed that members of the group under study considered it important to have “reliable social guarantees” (56.2%) and the fact of “getting high payments” (51.9%). Not less important was the opportunity for professional development in the workplace (54.0%). The given responses are dominated by the welfare strategy, followed by the indicators of the success strategy.

At the initial stage of employment in the public service sector, desire to be useful to the country and the people (the strategy of self-realization) was paramount to 29.2% of respondents. According to the replies, when applying for public office, a small number of officials in the region seek authority (5.4%), but a significant role in choosing a job is given to the ability to maintain a good business relationship with the leaders (44.5%). More than a third of respondents became state officials because they decided to work according to the acquired qualification (36.7% – the adaptation strategy).

The situation in Russia of the 2000s was different from what it is now. Thus, in the study conducted by the researchers at RAGS (Russian Academy of State Service) under supervision of the President of the Russian Federation within the research project “Assessment of the theoretical foundations of personnel policy and the formation of the body of civil officials in the federal bodies of executive power”, which was held in May 2001 in 8 central offices of the federal executive authorities, as well as in 15 subjects of the Federation and involved 1,183 public officials, when the respondents answered the question “What aim did you have when you joined the public service?” the welfare strategy dominated over “the guarantee of a stable job and stability” (42.2%) [9; 250].

This was followed by «the desire to fully realize professional skills» (35.5% of the respondents (the success strategy)). In comparison with the presented figures, the idea of commitment – «a desire to benefit the society and the State» (31.2%) also seems significant. 9.2% of the respondents were guided by the desire to have a prestigious place in society, or the desire to have extensive contacts with people who may be useful in life (the power strategy). 7.1% of the respondents had no other option in choosing a job (the adaptation strategy).

The secondary analysis of sociological research revealed that in 2001 Russian officials were dominated by the strategy of welfare (41.0%), the strategy of success (40.0%), and the strategy of self-realization (20.0%). In 2005, among the officials of the Ural Federal District the strategy of welfare prevailed (49.3%), but the strategy of self-realization followed it (38.7%, 18.4% higher than the success strategy) [10, 179].

In the course of the sociological survey and analysis of the data, the researcher calculated the following correlation of life strategies of modern civil servants of the Tyumen Region, taking into account the author's concept (see Table 1).

Table 1

Life strategies of modern state officials of the Tyumen Region, in percentage correlation

Type of life strategies	The Tyumen Region	Including:		
		The south of the Tyumen Region	The Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District	The Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District
The welfare strategy	38.1	38.2	36.6	35.6
The success strategy	24.7	24.1	26.8	26.7
The self-realization strategy	17.6	16.1	18.7	18.4
The adaptation strategy	13.0	15.1	11.3	12.0
The power strategy	6.6	6.5	6.6	7.3

The table shows that the most common type of life strategies of modern officials in the Tyumen Region is the welfare strategy (38.1%). The strategy of success is typical of 13% of the personnel of the state apparatus (24.7%) and even more rarely we come across the strategy of self-realization (17.6%). Moreover, the percentage of these types is closer to the all-Russian indicators, rather than to those in the Ural Federal District.

The strategies identified by the author of this article appear in officials' lives less often than the above mentioned ones, nevertheless they occupy a significant proportion of the total proportions. Thus, the strategy of adaptation (a passive strategy) characterizes 13.0% of officials, and the power strategy dominates only among 6.6% of the respondents, due to the massive nature of the survey of the personnel of the public sector (the majority of them do not occupy leadership positions even at the lower level).

A closer look at the individual districts of the Tyumen Region reveals that in all areas of life the gradation of strategies' types is similar, but it is presented in different proportions. Thus, the "northern" officials selected the strategy of self-realization, sought power and aimed at success. The officials of the South chose economic and social stability. Moreover, they chose the type of adaptive behavior through the strategy of adaptation, which is due to the level of wealth of the region, the degree of confidence in the local power, political and economic conditions in each subject, and general

cultural peculiarities of the region. The Southern officials largely enjoy wellbeing and adaptation strategies, while their Yugra neighbours follow the strategies of success and self-realization. Yamal officials occupy the medium position in the distribution of life strategies, but they are more focused on achieving power.

Content analysis of the structural components of life strategies of Russian officials, carried out by the author, showed a high level of interest in the material, positional, professional, and personal advantages of being a civil servant. The profession of a civil servant is also associated with values, connected with personal success, material wellbeing, and professional career.

Life strategies include personal orientations (the representation of personal life events), professional (aimed at achieving professional status), life (assuming certain life patterns of behavior), and hence they predetermine officials' personal and professional life and their future, which proves the importance of the research in the theoretical and practical sense. Theoretically it can be the basis for further development of sociology, social psychology and anthropology, human resource management, human studies, and management. Empirically it can serve to improve the quality of work of officials and their professionalism.

The results of the survey allow identifying existing advantages and possible difficulties associated with the implementation of a particular life strategy by the officials, and they can be used in the professional activity of the employees involved in future competitive selection of officials, as well as those who work with the personnel in the sphere. The identified results can be used in the management process, in reforms in the civil sector legislation, in scientific research projects requiring the use of empirical indicators of life strategies preferred by officials. The presented data may be reflected in the textbooks and can be useful for theorists and practitioners of public administration, students studying for degrees in Sociology and State and Municipal Management, as well as anyone interested in sociological problems of personnel policy of public authorities and of the bureaucratic apparatus of modern Russia and its regions.

According to the author, it is necessary to conduct regular sociological research (monitoring) of life strategies of Russian officials at the federal and regional levels, which will help predict their behavior and create conditions for the adjustment of their life values and orientations for the good of the country. Specific problems experienced by officials (especially by those who have recently joined the state administration system) throughout their professional activity, require careful attention on the part of managers and human resources specialists.

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