

Re-submission: June 2019

*Title:*

**Strategic policy plans of socio-economic development and the politics of expertise in Putin's Russia: the "hollow paradigm" perspective**

Word Count: 11 237

## **Abstract**

*Russia's 2018 presidential election campaign was accompanied by a new round of writing of strategies for the country's socio-economic development. This paper analyses these documents from the perspective of the "politics of expertise" defining the relations between the political regime and policy experts. The analysis draws on authoritarian politics and the public policy literatures. The article argues that the response to the dilemmas of authoritarian governance is an emergence of the "hollow paradigm" approach to the politics of expertise. This paradigm is vague on its substantive, ideational element but strong on the procedural, expert community-binding element. The analysis contributes to the understanding of the politics surrounding the writing of strategic plans, the role of policy ideas, and state-society relations in contemporary Russia.*

**Key words:** Russian politics, strategies of economic and social development, policy-making, experts

## *Introduction*

How is cohesion maintained in an authoritarian political system? Authoritarian leaders distribute rents to the elites and provide public goods for citizens. The former helps to maintain the balance among elite actors; the latter prevents popular uprising (Gandhi 2008, Svoboda 2012). In Russia, the policy-making process in which the redistributive decisions are made, is seen by some scholars as being dominated by the inner circle of the elite actors close to the Russian president (e.g. Petrov et al 2014, Gel'man 2015). Other scholars view it as a heavily bureaucratic process in which different parts of the state bureaucracy and attached to them elite and social interests, compete for their preferred policy options and the distribution of budget funds (Fortescue 2016, 2017, Martus 2017). In addition, following the contemporary global trend towards participatory governance (Truex 2017), Russian authorities have increasingly invited the participation of civil society actors in policy-making and implementation, particularly in the social sphere (e.g. Dean 2017, Owen and Bindman 2017, Skokova et al 2018, Bindman et al 2018). Policy experts – working at think-tanks, NGOs and academia who often move between these organisations and jobs within the state bureaucracy – are frequently referred to as a part of the bureaucratic policy process. Yet, with few exceptions (Gel'man 2018), they rarely themselves become the subject of scholarly analysis. This paper is devoted to them. It essentially asks how is the cohesion maintained in relation to the fascinating and diverse group which makes up the Russian expert community? The paper particularly examines expert involvement in writing strategies of socio-economic development, many of which emerged in Russia during Vladimir Putin's time in power. Although the strategic plans of socio-economic development have received considerable attention in the literature (Mehdiyeva 2011, Cooper 2012, Sutela 2012: 54-64, 222-31; Connolly 2013, Gromov and Kurichev 2014, Andrew Monaghan 2013, 2014, Wengle 2015), I approach them from a new angle, which is termed "the politics of expertise". By this, I mean the interaction between the expert community involved in developing such documents, on the one hand, and Russian government officials and top politicians, on the other hand. I argue that understanding how strategic plans are developed helps us answer the question how loyalty of the expert community to the regime is maintained. The paper argues that strategies of socio-economic development play an important role in the Russian politics of expertise by creating and sustaining the balance and preventing ruptures and dissatisfaction among the expert community. In order to demonstrate how strategic plans do that, I borrow and adapt a number of concepts from public policy literature within political science. Based on this literature I develop the concept of a "hollow paradigm". I argue that this concept defines the relationship between experts and the government in Russia in relation to writing economic development strategies.

Public policy literature holds experts to be influential actors for developing policies. As “knowledge actors”, experts’ motivation in the policy process is to get their preferred vision of policy adopted and implemented. The main currency of experts is *policy ideas*. Scholars have worked on devising different typologies of policy ideas (e.g. Hall 1993, Blyth 2001, Schmidt 2008). A special category of policy ideas are policy paradigms. Vivien Schmidt writes that policy paradigms represent a special class of policy ideas that “reflect(s) the underlying assumptions or organising principles orienting policy... define(s) the problems to be solved by ... policies; the issues to be considered; the goals to be achieved; the norms, methods, and instruments to be applied; and the ideals that frame the more immediate policy ideas proposed to solve any given problem.” (2008: 306). Likewise, a famous theorist of the paradigmatic analysis, Peter Hall (1993) argued that paradigms are generic ideas that include notions about the broad direction policy should be taking – the policy aim – as well as a complementary set of the means of policy – or policy instruments – through which the chosen policy aim can be implemented. So, for instance, the overarching paradigm of the deinstitutionalisation of welfare services in relation to children left without parental care includes such instruments as the formation of the institution of foster families, the provision of various incentives and benefits to foster parents, and the restructuring of old orphanages to assume new family-support functions (see Kulmala et al 2017). However, in addition to the substantive content of ideas, theorising about policy paradigms also involves a procedural element. Around policy paradigms (Hall 1993), experts join in coalitions and put forward their advocacy to have their preferred policy idea adopted and implemented. The change of policy paradigms is a complex process, but importantly, paradigm change happens when the authority shifts from one group of supporters to another (ibid, Blyth 2013, Oliver and Pemberton 2004). Paradigmatic competition is beneficial for policy as it permits a refinement of government responses to policy problems. Yet, the competition between the expert supporters of different paradigmatic visions means that some expert actors and their preferred policy paradigms will be sidelined. Such expert actors and their ideas can remain on the fringes of the policy process for a long time. For instance, Khmel'nitskaya (2015) demonstrates how supporters of the market approach to housing policy during the Soviet period were left on the margins of the policy-making process. While such experts continued being employed in research institutes and academia, they had no influence over the housing policy process until the days of *perestroika*. Turning back to the contemporary Russian scene and following the contention that the Russian regime is seeking to preserve the unity of the elites and allow participation in governance to different societal groups, ruptures among the expert community that can be associated with paradigmatic competition need to be avoided. Moreover, the need to produce sophisticated policies in different policy fields that are important for the provision of public goods means that experts represent an indispensable group for policy development. Thus,

experts are necessary in an authoritarian system of policy-making but their splits can be dangerous for the regime stability.

The paper argues that the process of writing general plans of socio-economic development holds a unique position in the Russian politics of expertise and is dominated by the *hollow paradigm* logic. I define the hollow paradigm as a special type of a policy paradigm which in substantive terms is characterised by the inclusion of different – often opposing – aims and means of policy, and also has an important organisational, or procedural, element that aims to preserve the unity of the expert community and seeks to engage as broad a circle of policy specialists as possible, in order to give a sense of involvement to different parts of this diverse group. The present paper elaborates how the “hollow paradigm” approach to writing plans of social and economic development serves several policy-related and regime-sustaining functions. By contrast, as far as the policy process in individual policy fields - for example, social, energy and fiscal policies (e.g. Gromov and Kurichev 2014, Khmel'nitskaya 2015, Wengle 2015, Kulmala et al 2017, Starodubtsev 2018<sup>1</sup>) – is concerned greater competition of opposing policy ideas is permitted by the authorities and observed by the researchers. The latter policy dynamic is reflected in many scholarly analyses of the protracted bureaucratic policy process taking place in different policy areas in Russia.

The paper relies on the method of “process-tracing” (George and Bennett 2005) which is usually applied for the analysis of the influence of expert ideas in the policy-making process (see Schmidt 2008: 308, also Duckett and Wang 2017). Time wise, the period covered is from the early 2000s until the end of 2017, but particular emphasis is on the 2010-2017 interval. The analysis is based on a review of relevant literature, and data reported by Russian government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and published in the general media.

### *The political regime and policy-making in Russia*

To understand how Russian policy plans of social and economic development are made in the process of the interaction between the country’s political system and policy experts, we need to address the logic of the Russian political regime and its implications for policy-making generally. This section relies on the literature on comparative authoritarianism

---

<sup>1</sup> Esp. Chapter 2.

and Russian politics. From the perspective of this literature, what are the sources of policy in Russia? We begin with the contention of the classic literature on authoritarian regimes that given that these systems cannot readily rally social mobilisation allowed by mass parties and ideologies, these regimes are inherently pluralistic (Linz 2000). In addition, the contemporary authoritarianism literature (Gandhi 2008, Svoboda 2012) argues that authoritarian rulers need to maintain their power positions with respect to fellow elite members, and remain popular with society. Authoritarian policies, therefore, will reflect this duality. Thus, a distinction can be made between sources related to the elite actors and to those associated with society at large.

We start with the elite dimension and its implications for policy-making. As a non-democracy, the Russian leadership is not accountable to its electorate. The elections, which nevertheless continue to be held, serve such functions as the alignment of different components of the political system throughout the country, as well as regime legitimisation for domestic and international audiences. In this context, it is argued that the ruling group is free to make policy choices irrespective of voter preferences. The result for policy has been the securitisation of its different spheres, and a range of policies that serve the interests of the state and those of the ruling elite (Cooper 2012, Oxinstierna and Tynkkynen 2014, Kulmala et al 2014, Gel'man 2016). The rent-seeking behaviour of the members of the ruling coalition leads them to set up sophisticated corruption schemes associated with state investment projects and state corporations. A wide range of policies thus emanates from the tight team surrounding the Russian president and reflects the policy ideas supported by this narrow leadership group, as well as seeking to maintain balance by distributing rents between different parts of the elite (Dawisha 2014, Orttung and Zhemukhov 2014). Such representation is consistent with comparative findings that in order to counter potential splits among the elite actors, authoritarian leaders govern by co-opting rivals and distributing rents to the members of the ruling coalition (Svoboda 2012).

The social dimension however is also important for understanding policies of autocracies. The regime needs to maintain popularity and prevent social mobilisation (Gandhi 2008, Hale 2015). Many studies emphasise that stability and economic growth were the main factors that ensured the popularity of Vladimir Putin's regime during the 2000s (e.g. Feklyunina and White 2011). The issue of "performance legitimacy", to use Samuel Huntington's (1968) phrase, will be discussed below. In addition, the Russian regime has used such tactics as the manipulation of public opinion, co-optation and coercion towards political opposition and civil society. During the 2000s, public support was harnessed through the cacophony of "virtual politics" and managed democracy created by Vladislav Surkov (Pomerantsev 2015).

His dismissal, which followed the mass demonstrations of winter 2011-2012, provided a reality check to the Surkovian tactics (Koesel and Bunce 2012). Yet, the manipulation of public opinion has persisted through close control of mass media (Hutchings and Tolz 2015) and of the public sphere, to which I also return below. Yet, during the period of diminished economic prosperity such tactics started to lose traction. Feklyunina and White (2011), for instance, demonstrated how in the wake of the GFC, Putin's regime deployed discourses of "*krizis*" and modernisation (also see Zweynert and Boldyrev 2017) to highlight the regime's contribution to the country's improved standing and living standards, while seeking to avoid the blame for the crisis's unexpectedly severe impact on the economy. The literature also emphasises that the changes in the economic context and citizens' expectations have led the authorities to underpin their popularity using a politics of identity and values that appeal to moral, national, historical and even theological justifications for their rule (Auer 2015, Pomerantsev 2015). These strategies were supported by the aggression towards neighbouring countries and the deterioration of relations with the West (Gel'man 2016, Hale 2015).

Another dimension of public support for an authoritarian regime relates to successes in policy. Mancur Olson (1993) famously argued that while their main goal is rents, autocratic leaders have strong incentives to look after the material wellbeing of their citizens. In addition, by presiding over growing economies, and by improving the provision of public goods and services, autocrats stay popular thus stifling off the emergence of social opposition to their rule. Yet, some scholars give greater weight to the sincerity of authoritarian leaders' sentiment about the development of their countries. "Dictatorial leaders care about both policies and rents even if they vary in the weights that they attach to each goal" (Gandhi 2008: 82). Research demonstrates that since the mid-2000s, many Russian citizens have enjoyed the results of the expansions of social programmes (Zavisca 2012, Kulmala et al 2014). Moreover, despite corruption scandals, many in the country experienced a sense of national pride as a result of "mega-events", such as the winter Sochi Olympics (Orttung and Zhemukov 2014). While researchers might argue that social spending in Russia since the mid-2000s was in fact commensurate with the increase in overall budget revenues and spending (Sutela 2012: 196-202), they equally acknowledge the positive change that people experienced in their lives (Kulmala et al 2014: 540).

Yet, as significant as these improvements are, they are not always sufficient. People want to have *influence* over policy. As Jennifer Gandhi writes: "They [the public] are often after more than rents alone. They want participation in policy-making" (Gandhi 2008: 71). The institutional channels that permit social groups certain influence over policy are authoritarian parties and parliaments. Therefore, in addition to the 'window dressing' view of authoritarian institutions

mentioned at the start of this section, another view advanced by comparative scholarship holds that in an environment of a controlled pluralism, partisan institutions allow social groups to get involved and their policy preference to be aired. Another recent and growing trend with policy-relevant consequences has been the use of “participatory governance”. Cooperation and consultations with social actors, such as big businesses and their associations, are well documented in the literature (Wengle 2015, Remington et al 2013, Remington 2011, Cook 2007). In addition, however, since the mid-2000s, increasing public protest activity and the growth of civil society organisation (Robertson 2011, White 2015) have led to growing cooperation and consultation between the authorities and non-profit organisations, social groups and even individual citizens (e.g. Khmel'nitskaya 2017, Owen and Bindman 2017, Skokova et al 2018). This involves real time and on-line discussions of plans, projects, and delivery of local services. Participatory forms allowing contributions by individuals to policy formulation represent a distinct trend in the context of neo-liberal governance in democratic countries (Lee 2015). In the context of non-democracy, while particular forms – such as on-line consultations – may be novel (see Truex 2017, Khmel'nitskaya 2017), the policy of public participation has a long tradition and was documented by the “groups of interests” literature studying socialist countries beginning in the 1960s (Hough 1971, Skilling 1970). The extent of public participation, this literature argued, could vary. Under “consultative authoritarianism” (Linz 2000: 254) the ruling group remained firmly in charge of policy but the participation of specialist groups was welcomed. In the meantime, greater autonomy and competition of opinion and ideas existed under “quasi-pluralistic authoritarianism” (Skilling 1970).

In sum, the authoritarian policy process has its roots in dilemmas of authoritarian governance concerning the elite and society. Yet, in addition to these two dimensions, one cannot overlook the influence exerted by the structures and procedure of Russian public administration. As post-communist Russia failed to develop institutions essential for policy oversight, such as the rule of law, law-applying and law-abiding civil service and a vibrant system of political parties – power is disproportionately concentrated in the executive branch. Policy matters are decided through the lengthy bureaucratic processes (Huskey 2009), which have been observed in different fields, for instance, the Far East development (Fortescue 2016), budget formation (Fortescue 2017), pension provision (Remington 2018) and environmental protection (Martus 2017). The top leadership, by using its political authority sparingly, avoids taking sides and by doing so, allows different state agencies, regional administrations and associated societal interests to compete for preferential treatment and budget funds. This bureaucratic politics, nonetheless, can be seen as a channel



for the authoritarian governance dilemmas in policy terms resulting in rent-seeking opportunities for the elites – including the administrative elite – and redistribution and limited access to policy formulation for the public.

### *Theorising experts' involvement in policy-making in Russia*

Where do experts fit in this process of the regime balancing between elite splits and public mobilisation? The public policy literature widely regards policy-making as a knowledge-intensive process and experts are carriers of policy-relevant knowledge (Howlett et al 2009). The literature on comparative authoritarianism notes that in the absence of ideology, authoritarian systems find it hard to motivate intellectual communities, as well as students and young people. Yet autocracies have a strong incentive to keep these groups engaged for the fear that they may provide radicalising ideologies to popular movements (Linz 2000: 164, 194).

Historically, the relationship between Russian authorities and intellectuals, specialists and scientists has been an uneasy one. While such professionals provided a source of knowledge and new ideas, their proposals and the underlying system of values often clashed with the policy-makers' own attitudes and priorities (Huskey 2009, Service 1997: 197). The problem was formulated as either “red or expert” by Jerry Hough (1971). In a similar vein, in the context of Russian non-democracy, experts emerge as ambiguous actors, belonging simultaneously to the elite and civic realms. Such an ambiguous position between two arenas is not unique to them and, in fact, has been observed with regard to civil society actors. David White (2015: 316), for instance, argues in relation to civil society figures' involvement in the political activity that the boundaries between political and civic arenas can be blurred. Groups, organisations and individuals can easily belong to more than one field. This argument can be extended to experts also, with their overlapping elite and civic status. Many of them work for non-state social organisations such as think tanks, socially oriented NGOs, professional associations and academia. While examples of such “celebrity” experts as Alexei Kudrin, Boris Titov, Sergei Glaziev and Oleg Klepach will be referred to below, these experts do not write strategic documents on their own. Development plans and strategies involve the work of many, often hundreds, of experts working in different “knowledge” organisations. One only gets to notice this multitude of expert actors when examining individual policy documents or conference proceedings. Considering this numerous group, most of whom are not necessarily earning excessive salaries, as the participant observation proves, their civic rather than elite status comes to the fore. Yet, as indispensable policy advisors, experts are close to the locus of power and decision-making in the executive

institutions and the parliament. Carriers of many state officials, politicians and parliamentarians pass through expert-type posts in think tanks, academia and consultancies (Fortescue 2017, Huskey 2009: 188).<sup>2</sup> Non-state experts take part in coalitions of state policy actors involved in bureaucratic policy formation in Russia (Fortescue 2016, 2017, Khmel'nitskaya 2017, Remington 2018).

From the above, we can take several points which are important for understanding the politics of expertise in Russia. Policy-making requires technical expertise, yet experts are a complex community to manage in an authoritarian polity. Experts are close to the top decision-making authority and thus represent elite type actors. From the perspective of comparative literature their divisions need to be avoided. At the same time, they are civil society actors who crave access to policy-making and can be brought on board using institutional channels as well as the participatory governance techniques mentioned above. These two requirements set a frame for the authorities in dealing with experts.

To this relational dimension, it is necessary to add the policy substance dimension, which expert advice inevitably involves. Not every piece of expert advice will receive an equal treatment in an authoritarian system of governance. In the literature we find two contrasting opinions on the importance of policy ideas and expert knowledge in contemporary Russia. Suzanne Wengle (2015: 131) summarises the common position about the low influence of ideas on politics in Russia by quoting the words of Dmitri Trenin that “ideas hardly matter [in Russia], while interests reign supreme”. In the meantime, while Zweynert and Boldyrev (2017) identify a vibrant debate and a division between liberal and statist views among the scholarly community, they conclude that the impact of these views on Russian economic policy was marginal. A similar position is found in the work of Bryan Taylor (2014) and Vladimir Gel'man (2018). By contrast, many other studies consider policy ideas championed by different professional and expert groups to have much more than stage-decoration consequences for policy changes. Areas of policy where such contribution has been examined include diverse policy domains: child welfare (Kulmala et al 2017), electric power generation (Wengle 2015), housing (Khmel'nitskaya 2015), prevention of human trafficking (Dean 2017), and fiscal relations between the Russian federal centre and the regions (Starodubtsev 2018).

---

<sup>2</sup> Although business and administrative posts predominate

This dichotomy of views about the role of experts and the extent of their policy contribution is not coincidental. In order to explore this role we need to bring in the insights of the ideational scholarship and pay close attention to the substance of policy ideas with which different experts work. Experts working and advising government officials in individual economic or social policy domains, such as welfare, housing and human trafficking regulation are often seen as having a greater impact on policy because improvements in these areas can deliver performance legitimacy to the political regime. Here the competition between different policy approaches pertaining to, for instance housing or urban planning, is welcomed by the authorities. Experts join with parts of the state bureaucracy and promote their preferred policy choices in a process involving intensive bureaucratic bargaining and tension of which many researchers write. Thus, in individual social and economic policy domains – success in which ensures the provision of public goods and performance legitimacy – the politics of expertise is characterised by a “quasi-pluralistic authoritarianism” identified in the classic studies of comparative authoritarianism.

By contrast, ideas related to the directions of general socio-economic development and reflected in the strategic plans produced during Vladimir Putin’s time in office concern the power structures in society and economy and are a highly political matter. They have a potential to undermine “the fusion of political power and economic privileges” (Zweynert and Boldyrev 2017: 932). Gel’man (2016) argues that plans of modernisation and reform can only be welcome if they stay clear of the basis of the authoritarian rule. Thus, while the debate on innovation and economic growth may be vibrant, its effects on policy are insignificant (ibid). Nonetheless, I suggest qualifying this view and argue that the expert impact on policy in relation to the general plans of socio-economic development follows the logic of “consultative authoritarianism” highlighted by Linz (also Truex 2017). In this category, the leadership group remains in charge. Yet, it welcomes specialist advice, helpful in policy-making. While remaining free to use a part of it or none, the leadership still needs to keep the intellectual community close and on its side. I propose to define this mode of authoritarian politics of expertise as a process of creating a “hollow paradigm”. As demonstrated in the introduction, coalitions of experts join around competing policy paradigms – “big ideas” that guide policy action and dictate the choice of policy tools. I argue that the requirement of the authoritarian politics to preserve unity among the elite actors, which includes policy experts close to the government, dictates the need to push this diverse community of different strands to work ideally on a single paradigm and as a joint broad coalition. Such a joint, but essentially “hollow” process of creating a shared paradigm about the future direction of the Russian society and economy represents an important dimension of writing strategies of socio-economic development. Zweynert and Boldyrev (2017) may be right

about the divisions among the Russian scholarly community, but the empirical analysis in the next section shows that through the process of elaborating strategic programmes the differences are bridged at least to a certain degree, and ruptures among the experts are prevented.

### *Strategies of socio-economic development in Russia: widening the expert coalition*

A multitude of strategies of socio-economic development emerged in Russia from the early 2000s and the new ones continued to appear in the run up to the 2018 presidential elections. Andrew Monaghan described this as “a plethora of new or updated concepts, strategies and doctrines” (Monaghan 2013: 1222). The first document of this kind known as the “Gref-programme” or “Strategy 2010” was developed by the Centre for Strategic Development (CSR), formed in the late 1990s. The plan became Putin’s first pre-election programme. This concise—eight-page-long—document, prepared by the team of experts headed by Herman Gref, was then followed by several other strategic papers. The most notable of these was “Strategy 2020”, developed by a much larger specialist community. In 2015-2016, the same broad team worked on “Strategy 2030”, commissioned by the government (Khamraev 2016a, Shevchenko 2016).

This section demonstrates that the circle of policy experts involved in the writing of strategies of socio-economic development had widened by the early 2010s compared to a decade earlier. It is also argued that while individual advocacy coalitions – liberal and statist - can be observed among the expert community, the divide between them is not as pronounced as one would assume. The section demonstrates that the process of strategic plan writing brings individual experts from these coalitions together in a process of creating a “hollow paradigm”, and through the joint work, even if deep agreement between them is not achieved, divisions – nonetheless – are avoided. This approach is particularly characteristic of the run-up to Vladimir Putin’s third term and the preparations for his fourth term as president.

While the early strategic documents of the Putin era, the Gref programme, has certainly not been overlooked by scholarly attention with respect to its contents (Cooper 2012, Sutela 2012), it is worth devoting specific attention to the expert actors who authored this early document and their relationship to other groups within the specialist community. The development of the “Gref Programme” involved a fairly small group of experts who formed a new policy think tank, the CSR (Khamraev 2016a, Sutela 2012: 54). The close association of this group with the ascending president

catapulted their proposals directly into the centre of the policy process. The preparation of the Gref plan was similar to the development of economic reforms by a team of committed but isolated government reformers and experts during the early post-communist transition (Shleifer and Treisman 2000, Sutela 2012). After the development of the programme, the policy produced on its basis led to the adoption of a large package of social and economic legislation in December 2004. As Cook (2007) argues, the reduction of the independent role of the parliament, and the compromises achieved with powerful bureaucratic constituencies, were important for the adoption of the initiatives of the Gref Programme within the social sphere. At the same time, she refers to interview data with social policy experts who complained that while offering “... really deep analysis ... of substantive possibilities” (ibid: 154) the Gref plan nonetheless represented only the “... ideas of a few people” (ibid: 183). Thus, specialists like the ones interviewed in Cook’s study were never consulted. This demonstrates that an exclusive group comprising the Gref expert team connected to the president was central to this plan development, whereas other parts of the specialist community – the experts referred to in Linda Cook’s study – were shut out of the process.

It could be argued, however, that the expert coalition started to widen after “Concept 2020” was developed by government ministries— primarily the Ministries of Economy and Finance, the latter headed by Alexei Kudrin at the time—and adopted by a government resolution in 2008 (Cooper 2012: 9-10, Monaghan 2013: 1233). This new strategic statement was made almost instantaneously obsolete by the effects of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, necessitating a new round of revision, this time with the participation of a significantly larger group of specialist advisors (Sulakshin 2011, Cooper 2012: 10). The development of the new document, “Strategy 2020” led by Yaroslav Kuzminov and Vladimir Mau, of HSE and ANKh respectively, included 21 expert groups and involved around 1,500 experts (Makarov 2011). Such a wide spectrum of expertise and the many specialists involved can be observed by examining the table of contents of the document.<sup>3</sup> This demonstrates a significant broadening of the expert community brought into the process of strategic plans writing compared to the early 2000s period.

The HSE and ANKh were not the only centres of expertise involved in the debate surrounding the development of strategic plans during Dmitry Medvedev’s presidency. The Institute for Contemporary Development (INSOR), having assembled around itself a coalition of intensely liberal economists, social scientists and business leaders, and becoming

---

<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://2020strategy.ru/>, last accessed June 2019.

linked to Dmitry Medvedev in the mid-2000s, was responsible for the development of four National Priority Projects (in healthcare, education, housing and agriculture) aimed at strengthening Russia's social capital.<sup>4</sup> A programme by the INSOR institute entitled "Finding (or Defining) the Future" appeared in late 2011 (INSOR 2011).

HSE/ANKh and INSOR presented proposals for liberal technical modernisation of Russia's economy and social policy in the case of the latter team, and of general liberal—including political—modernisation in the case of the former. Many of the proposals of the HSE/ANKh group of experts were included in Vladimir Putin's "May decrees" of 2012 indicating the influence of this expert work over policy development. In addition, from 2015 to spring 2016, the HSE/ANKh coalition worked on "Strategy 2030", a document commissioned by Dmitry Medvedev's government (Khamraev 2016a).

Apart from the "liberals", however, another broad and loosely-defined advocacy coalition of "national conservatives" or "gosudarstvenniki" existed (Zweynert and Boldyrev 2017: 929-31), namely the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN)–based specialist community. This group included academics with former or current attachment to its economic and mathematical research organisations, for instance the Central Institute for Economics and Mathematics (*TsEMI*) and the Institute for National Economic Forecasting (Nikolaeva 2016). Some of this community's views come close to the statist views expressed by such prominent actors as Academician and Presidential Advisor Sergei Glaziev (ibid, Aslund 2013), and the chief economist of the VEB state bank, Andrei Klepach, whose early career paths passed through the above-mentioned institutes.<sup>5</sup> The RAN-based coalition, including Glaziev and Klepach, connects to the "Party of Growth" of Boris Titov<sup>6</sup> and centred round the Stolypin Club.<sup>7</sup> The latter was formed in 2006 on the initiative of *Delovaya Rossiya*, an association of medium-sized businesses. While, Boris Titov, a politician and lobbyist, may appear more of an elite status figure, the fact that Titov does not write policy strategies on his own but as a part of a large community of policy experts, supports the view adopted in this paper of a mixed expert-civic status which policy experts as a group have.

---

<sup>4</sup> See [www.insor-russia.ru/](http://www.insor-russia.ru/) / *natsional'nye proekty*.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/323/biography> ; [http://www.banki.ru/wikibank/klepach\\_andrey\\_veb/](http://www.banki.ru/wikibank/klepach_andrey_veb/)

<sup>6</sup> In the September 2016 parliamentary elections the party received 1.29 % of the votes.  
[http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100067795854&vrn=100100067795849&region=0&global=1&sub\\_region=0&prver=0&prnetvd=0&vibid=100100067795854&type=242](http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100067795854&vrn=100100067795849&region=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&prnetvd=0&vibid=100100067795854&type=242)

<sup>7</sup> <http://stolypinsky.club/>

Despite their opposing views, there is evidence pointing to the fact that in the process of writing development strategies there were no clear dividing lines between the liberal and statist expert coalitions, and following the “hollow paradigm” logic advanced in this paper, there exists a considerable degree of fluidity among their members. For instance, conservative statist experts related to the *RAN* coalition were taking part in the improvement of the governmental (fiscally conservative) “Strategy 2020”, while simultaneously taking part in the *INSOR* coalition working on an even more liberal version of the modernisation strategy advocating economic and political reform (Makarov 2011: 59, Sheviakov 2011: 54). Some of these pro-growth experts’ proposals, such as the creation of 25 million skilled workplaces or the 50 percent increase in labour productivity, also made their way into the 2012 “May decrees” (Cooper 2012). This demonstrates that since the late 2000s, strategic planning has therefore been characterised by the broadening of the “insider” circle, and a much larger group of experts, with highly diverse policy views, being able to claim that they participate in developing different parts of Russian strategic plans.

The development of economic strategies has by no means subsided during Vladimir Putin’s third term. Some new expert organisations have become prominent among the specialist community. Alexei Kudrin’s work is a good example and his career is noteworthy. A colleague of Vladimir Putin from the St Petersburg days in the 1990s, Kudrin was part of the Centre for Strategic Development (*CSR*) team in the late 1990s. In the 2000s Alexei Kudrin held a post of Minister of Finance and Vice Prime Minister from which he resigned in March 2011 following an argument with then President Medvedev over budget spending priorities. During the 2011-2012 electoral fraud protests, Kudrin never expressed public support for anti-regime moods and instead argued for an evolutionary transformation of the Russian political system (White 2015: 315), the position that he continued to hold during the run-up to the 2018 presidential elections (Butrin 2017b). Yet, not having this domestically and internationally prominent expert figure among supporters in 2011 did not add to the Russian regime’s popularity at a time of widespread contention. Kudrin meanwhile, leaving his ministerial post behind has continued to command the respect of Vladimir Putin, who described him as “one of the exceptionally useful experts” (Khamraev 2016a). Kudrin moved to become a civil society activist by forming a new expert organisation—the Committee for Civic Initiatives (*KGI*) (Orekhin 2016). This expert group held several “Civic Forums”, which attracted substantial attention within Russian society. Kudrin described the *KGI*’s objectives as proposing a “series of professionally-developed documents, each offering concrete measures addressing nascent problems of different spheres .... so that their quality and depth .... match those developed by government

experts” (Khamraev 2015: 6). On 14 April 2016 in his televised “direct line” with the public, President Putin stated that Alexei Kudrin might be again taking a role at the renowned *CSR*. Newspapers were quick to remind of the *CSR*’s role in developing Vladimir Putin’s first pre-election programme in the late 1990s. By late April 2016, Kudrin was elected Chairman of the *CSR* Council. Additionally, in May, his position within the Presidential Economic Council also increased to that of deputy chair. In these top advisory jobs, at the president’s request, Kudrin began to work on the Strategy for Russia’s Development Post-2018. The new strategy was cast as Putin’s election programme for his fourth presidential term (Khamraev 2016a, Shevchenko 2016).

Once elected (Butrin 2016) chairman of the *CSR* in May 2016, Kudrin’s work has followed the “hollow paradigm” approach. He began by building an inclusive new community of state and non-state experts, implicitly including those from the ANKh/HSE group, who up until May 2016 had been working on “Strategy 2030”. Media reported that some of the “Party of growth” actors had been included in this group as well (Kriuchkova and Butrin 2016), despite their vocal disapproval of the “Kudrin’s paradigm”.<sup>8</sup> For instance, the “Challenges-2017” conference was held in early June 2016 with around one hundred experts and ministerial officials taking part. Alexei Kudrin confirmed that by summer 2017, these specialists had to write a new strategy for the country’s long-term development for 2018–2024. During the second half of 2016, many meetings took place between Kudrin and associated experts and Dmitry Medvedev, the presidential administration, and different ministerial structures (Khamraev 2016b, Shevchenko 2016).

At the same time, an alternative advocacy coalition of statist experts has also found its place in the process. During late 2014–2015, the “pro-growth” community of the *RAN* experts, headed by Glaziev and Klepach, had been working on a “Growth Economics” report, offering alternatives to the government’s tight monetary policy and to the government-commissioned “Strategy 2030” (Nikolaeva 2016). This work, even though seemingly at odds with the government officials’ thinking, received an endorsement and encouragement of the top leadership. Moreover, the authorities invited closer cooperation and discussion among the specialists with the statist and liberal views. They also did not limit the development of strategic plans by any strict deadlines yet welcomed a continuing dialogue between the holders of opposing expert ideas. So, in May 2016, President Putin for example, at the same time as commissioning Alexei Kudrin’s programme, asked Boris Titov, Chairman of the Stolypin Club standing for the *RAN*-based statist expert

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://stolypinsky.club/2016/10/19/titov-programma-stolypinskogo-kluba-strategiya-rosta-v-yanvare-budet-predstavlena-prezidentu/>



coalition, to develop the “Growth Economics” report into a full “Strategy of Growth” by January 2017. Putin and Medvedev met several times with Titov during 2016, and a discussion space between the government and the pro-growth experts was created in the form of the interdepartmental group at the government’s Analytical Centre.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the year, the Stolypin Club/RAN-based community presented the “structure” of their new strategy to the public. They also announced that in order to escape being, as Titov described it, “a broad discussion platform”, the Club had formed a scientific research institute, the Pyotr Stolypin Institute for Growth Economics (Nikolaeva 2016).<sup>10</sup> January 2017 did not see the unveiling of the new Strategy as had been suggested. Instead, discussions began between the Stolypin Club members and other prominent experts and academics such as the Institute of International Relations (MGIMO).<sup>11</sup>

Further tracing of the Party of Growth’s and Kudrin’s liberal strategies shows that both programmes, nonetheless, were completed by the spring 2017 and presented to the president and government officials at a meeting on 30 May 2017 (Butrin 2017, Nikolaeva and Butrin 2017). These programmes continued to have an important role in the politics of expertise after this meeting as well. The Titov’s strategy became available in the public domain.<sup>12</sup> Kudrin’s document by contrast was never published. Yet, despite its official unveiling, the programme remained under elaboration during the rest of the year. For instance, Putin and Kudrin continued speaking about the preparation (*o podgotovke*) of the Strategy of development for 2018-2024 in November 2017.<sup>13</sup> Boris Titov, an elite spokesman for the statist expert community, in the meantime also had several consultations with the government in summer-autumn 2017, and in November announced that the Strategy of Growth was to become his programme for the March 2018 presidential elections.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, whereas in 2016 it appeared that Alexei Kudrin developed his strategic document in collaboration with government officials, at the 30 May meeting, MinFin and MinEkonomiki presented their own separate version of the development plans (Kriuchkova 2017, Butrin 2017).

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://stolypinsky.club/2016/09/27/programma-ekonomika-rosta-dorabotana-v-sootvetstvii-s-porucheniem-predsedatelya-pravitelstva-rf-dmitriya-medvedeva/> and <http://stolypinsky.club/2016/10/19/titov-programma-stolypinskogo-kluba-strategiya-rosta-v-yanvare-budet-predstavlena-prezidentu/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://stolypinsky.club/2016/12/21/predstavlena-struktura-strategii-rosta/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://stolypinsky.club/2017/01/25/kpi-dlya-administratsii-rosta-dolzno-stat-ispolnenie-majskih-ukazov-prezidenta/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://stolypinsky.club/strategiya-rosta-3/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3472301>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3479825>

In summary, the professional community involved in writing expert strategic documents during Putin's third term was characterised by its fluidity, and its involvement in the policy process. It is also closely connected to the official structures—we may even speak of the “*pantouflage*”-like system joining the expert community and state officials, to use Eugene Huskey's (2009) term. Because of the continuous movement of individual specialist actors from expert structure to government posts and back, we cannot really draw clear dividing lines between the positions of policy officials and experts, as implied in Zweynert and Boldyrev's article (2017). We may speak of the inclusive nature of the coalition involved in the process of development of strategic plans. At the same time, I argue that this inclusive policy debate has its own functionality, including what I defined by the term “hollow paradigm” as explained below.

#### *The benefits of writing strategies of socio-economic development*

First, Cooper (2012) suggests a functional reason for this “collective puzzlement” involving different coalitions of experts and officials. The broad involvement of policy experts, representing the entire spectrum of views on Russian social and economic development, allows the Russian leadership to draw on the different proposals that various sections of this large community put forward in evolving circumstances. The policy goals and instruments it finds most acceptable can then be applied in the subsequent policy formulation. Moreover, association with competent expert actors allows the leadership to reassert its claim to effective technocratic governance, stated by Susanne Wengle (2015: 33-4, 245) as “doing the right thing for the country”. In this light, the invitation from the president to Alexei Kudrin to become involved in the development of “Strategy 2018-2024” during the tense pre-election period – allows the leadership to simultaneously bring on board new policy proposals, and to boost its claim to “doing the right thing” within a challenging environment.

Yet I would argue that the all-inclusive nature of policy plans, both in terms of the actors involved and of the ideas put on paper, displays the qualities of the hollow paradigm. It is not unusual to come across experts' comments that the goals chosen in such documents are “declaratory ... and thus unattainable”, with the policy's means poorly defined (Sulakshin 2011: 12). The need for internal coherence between policy goals, and consistency between its means, is hard to sustain while policy experts of often opposed ideational strands participate in writing the same text, while it is further diluted in the process of seemingly endless consultations.

The process of blending in different, sometimes incompatible, goals and means of policy in a joint “hollow paradigm” can be illustrated by examining the process of the completion of the two strategies during 2017 by expert teams headed by Alexei Kudrin and Boris Titov and the evolution of the contents of these two documents. When the documents were presented to the President at the 30 May 2017 meeting, a suggestion was expressed to create a “united economic strategy” (Butrin 2017a, b). The proposal did not hold but a great deal of rapprochement between the texts had, nevertheless, occurred. Kudrin’s strategy consisted of three central elements: (1) economic, particularly the Russian technological revolution; (2) measures to improve social capital including greater budget financing of healthcare and education and increasing pension age; and (3) administrative reform. Meanwhile, the Party of Growth’s programme, in its earlier version contained measures to create 25 million hi-tech work-places, which in the 2017 version was increased to 35 million. A new set of social development measures appeared in it during the winter 2017. While it acquired such human-capability-enhancing measures as preventive healthcare and investment in education, which also featured in Kudrin’s strategy, the Stolypin Club community did not mention the increase of retirement age – one of the flagship measures in the Kudrin’s strategy – but supported the development of pension saving schemes. The unique selling point of the Stolypin Club strategy – the application to Russia of “Quantitative Easing”, leading to higher inflation and public debt and severely criticised by Kudrin (2017) – was also somewhat muted. The public debt estimates in the programme were scaled down from 60 percent contained in the earlier proposals to 30 percent in the May 2017 version. Only Titov’s strategy contained lobbyist demands to extend funding for the ‘institutions of development’: the Funds for industrial development and for the development of monotowns, VEB and the Russian Railways corporation – for RUB1.5 billion annually.

In addition, presented at the same 30 May 2017 meeting, the government’s own plans – developed by the economic bloc of the government – contained a similar package of economic and social policy measures (Kriuchkova 2017, Butrin 2017a,b). Vladimir Putin, however, true to his style (Fortescue 2010: 44) suggested that either one of the strategies would be taken as the basis of policy, or policy would emerge on “the basis of deep analysis and further consultations” (Butrin 2017a). No time limit for the completion of this work was set either.

One may ask how different options thus included in these strategy texts advance interests of specific bureaucratic and elite groups, for instance the social bloc of the government, state corporations and so on. I have earlier referred to several recent studies which note the involvement of expert actors in the bureaucratic battles for resources and policy

options. Yet, it is the objective of this paper to examine a different dynamic involved in the politics of expertise: the dynamic associated with the hollow paradigm approach to dealing with the expert community. As the process tracing above illustrates, expert actors are encouraged to work together, smooth differences, constantly negotiate in a process which under another set of institutional circumstances would be more reminiscent of elaboration of official government programmes, yet the policy plans examined here have no executive power attached to them. However, a different rationale for this relentless negotiation of policy plans is proposed in this paper. From the viewpoint of the politics of ideas, paradigms are broad visions of policy binding communities of experts together. While the policy-relevant value of an all encompassing “hollow” paradigm may suffer from the internal contradictions of details contained in the policy plans, the community-binding element involved in this policy work is not insignificant. The participatory process of creating strategic plans, the hollow paradigm approach, has a value of its own in the context of authoritarian governance where elite splits are dangerous. Notwithstanding that important policy details included in the strategies and the question as to how those details benefit different interests are worth studying in their own right, the process of writing policy strategies also deserves attention. This process attracts a large number of policy experts into the strategy-writing exercise and grants this undertaking and policy-making in general broader “embeddedness” within their community. For instance, as Irina Dezhina (2013) writes, the scientific community in Russia may be insufficiently organised in the form of established academic societies. Yet, as the above shows, the policy process in Russia provides a means for the politicisation and binding of the scientific community in an inclusive policy sub-system involved in policy development. This process can be interpreted from several viewpoints. From the viewpoint of developmental state literature, this may not be a dissimilar process to the one described by Wengle (2015) as “enlisting” the owners of large industrial conglomerates in the process of sectoral reform. This facilitates cooperation on other matters and attempts to create the sought-after “infrastructural power” of the state (Mann 1984) or the “embeddedness” of the state in society (Evans 1995). However, from the perspective of authoritarian politics advanced here, the process of creating a hollow policy paradigm – in which many policy instruments and views seemingly merge into, and where conflicts are smoothed, allows experts a place in policy-making and prevents defections among this indispensable and diverse elite group. One thing is Boris Titov announcing his intention to run for presidency during the autumn 2017, another – him or prominent experts like Aleksei Kudrin, joining the political opposition. The invitation to Sergei Guriev from President Putin to return from a self-imposed exile aired in 2015 can be considered in this light (Smertina 2015, also Zweynert and Boldyrev 2017: 936). In this way, the very participatory process—the hollow paradigm approach—puts the emphasis on the process rather than development of coherent policy plans, thereby tying the specialist community—academics, experts and other professional groups—to the political regime. The phenomenon of a hollow paradigm

observed in Russia since the late 2000s, represents a product of the Russian regime of governance where a balance needs to be maintained, with the elites and civil society being engaged in policy-matters, and the policy experts of differing views being engaged in both elite and civic realms. This is particularly relevant in the highly politicised part of the Russian ideational spectrum associated with the plans of socio-economic development.

A question can be asked about how consequential are policy ideas included in these strategic plans? A similar question in fact was asked about public involvement in policy debates during the socialist period (see: Fortescue 2010: 35). At first glance, it is easy to dismiss their influence, as the ruling elite, following the definition of consultative authoritarianism, is free to take or ignore the advice. Yet, we can note the advice is often taken and applied in policy. For instance, the Development Strategy for 2018-2024 has not been published, which may indicate that perhaps it is likely to provide a source of policy initiatives. This particularly can be relevant under conditions of crisis of some kind. For instance, in the circumstance of the squeeze on Russian budgetary resources, proposals from experts like Aleksei Kudrin were taken seriously when deciding on budgetary priorities for the critical 2017 budget (Khmelnitskaya 2017). We also may expect an influence to emerge in case of leadership changes. A new ascending and/or reform-minded leader is likely to turn to reformist ideas to inform the new policies. To take a historical example, Archie Brown (1996) demonstrated that proposals for economic and political reform, long in circulation among Soviet intellectuals, played a key role for defining policy during the *perestroika* period and the early post-Soviet transition. Valerie Bunce (1981) argued that new leaders are likely to turn to new ideas and policy reform to consolidate their leadership position.

### *Conclusion*

This article started with a puzzle how cohesion is maintained by the Russian regime with regard to the diverse group of experts and policy specialists. In its analysis, the paper focussed on the process of the development of strategies of socio-economic development. Unlike other studies devoted to strategic plans, this paper concentrated on the interaction between the politics and expertise that enthuse the preparation of policy strategies. The argument here is not to deny the important policy-ideas-generating dimension or the regime legitimating effects of policy strategies, which are highlighted in many studies. The analysis in this paper aims to *complement* such work by illuminating the politics—expertise nexus associated with this process.

This article has argued that in Russia the experts' involvement in policy and politics is dominated by the "hollow paradigm" logic when it comes to writing the well-known strategies of socio-economic development. These documents are associated with the structure and organisation of Russian government and economy, and thus have implications for the power position of the leadership. This represents a kind of expert involvement in policy where pluralism is maintained, but which is closely controlled, and where the relationship between experts and the authorities follow the "consultative authoritarianism" mode. Beyond the strategic plans, however, experts and specialists are involved in policy development in different economic and social domains. Here, a greater diversity of expert views and a competition between them is described by the existing research, in a process closer approximating to a "quasi-pluralistic authoritarianism". Effective social and economic policy-making and implementation – involving competition of expert opinion – is prerequisite to success in policy and helps with performance legitimacy of an authoritarian state. In the meantime, participation in policy-making of different social groups – including important experts with their elite and civil society status – helps to bind these communities to the political system. Both aspects – performance legitimacy and participation – are dictated by the requirement of authoritarian governance. This leads to the regime adopting a "quasi-pluralistic" approach to experts' involvement in policy-making in relation to those areas of policy that generate performance legitimacy but without threatening elite rents and opportunities.

The paper has argued that the process of writing strategies of socio-economic development, which substantively concern the basis of the political system in the country is different from such "normal" policy-making process. It presents a mechanism to engage the diverse but ambiguous community of policy experts with the political regime. An authoritarian regime faces two existential dilemmas: to maintain a balance among the fellow elite members and prevent social mobilisation and opposition to its rule. Experts, seen as simultaneously civic and elite actors, are indispensable for effective policy-making but also comprise an important societal community, which the political leadership is keen to engage. In order to conceptualise the nature of the politics of expertise regarding writing policy strategies, a concept of a "hollow paradigm" was proposed. Building on the insights of public policy literature, which sees ideas as an essential element of the policy process connected to experts, the paper suggested de-coupling the substantive and organisational effects of ideas. The concept of the hollow paradigm represents a "big idea" for socio-economic policy, which has a much more pronounced organisational, community binding element, compared to similar policy paradigms observed in democracies. The "hollow paradigm" joins a broad coalition of state and non-state expert actors around it. Yet, as experts of often opposing views are pushed by the logic of authoritarian governance to participate in its elaboration, the

paradigm cannot be precise on policy details, which normally is the case in the policy practice of democratic systems. From this perspective the central function of the hollow paradigm is the procedural one and makes sense from the viewpoint of the many dilemmas of authoritarianism. In relation to the expert community, they include the need to harness policy advice, while not alienating parts of this important group of actors. The need to do so becomes particularly pressing in conditions when the social pressures within the country and international pressures mean that the authority of the Russia regime is contested.

The argument about the relationship between politics and expertise put forward in this paper also speaks to the literature about state-society relations in Russia. These relations are based on “a somewhat skewed corporatism” (Remington et al 2013: 1874) with respect to business interests, trade unions and civil society organisations (Owen and Bindman 2017, Evans 2012). These societal groups are tapped for policy specific knowledge. Yet, the exchange with the state relies predominantly on informal consultations as opposed to formal channels, such as the parliament or institutions of collective bargaining. My analysis demonstrates that as far as the expert community is concerned two different types of relations, featuring different degrees of pluralism co-exist in Russia, with a more controlled consultative authoritarianism and a less controlled variety of quasi-pluralistic authoritarianism. Recognising the duality of the politics of expertise arena helps to perceive the relationship between the political system and social actors as more nuanced. The dual nature of this arrangement should not come as a surprise, neither for the scholars of Russia (Sakwa 2010) nor for the scholars of comparative authoritarianism (Linz 2000: 186). In such systems, personalist politics are always in tension with the legal-rational elements of the system and aspirations of some of the actors within the ruling group.

Finally, the hollow paradigm perspective on policy plans in Russia, to a certain degree, chimes with the arguments put forward by Brian Taylor (2014) about Russia’s “virtual politics” and the untouchable basis of the Russian authoritarianism as argued by Vladimir Gel’man (2016). Similarly, Zweynert and Boldyrev conclude that “strategy papers and official declarations mainly serv[e] to simulate reform activity, and conceal the fact that any deep-going structural change would endanger the volatile equilibrium between those who enjoy privileged access to rents, and is thus intolerable to those in power” (2017: 935). From the perspective of this paper, strategic policy documents with their qualities of a hollow paradigm, have an element of political theatre about them as well. On the other hand, there is another tradition in Russian scholarship, which recognises the commitment of different groups of Russian reformers to

initial coherent sets of policy ideas. However, it is emphasised that more often than not the original reform plans change beyond recognition in the process of their implementation (Shleifer and Treisman 2000, Cook 2007, Sutela 2012). The argument here is that the role of expert knowledge and ideas in Russian politics and policy-making should be seen as multidimensional. Interpreted as a process of creating a hollow paradigm, strategic plans play a role in the phony as opposed to real politics. At the same time, they are important in maintaining the stability of the Russian regime. It helps to preserve the unity of elites and participation of civil society, prevents authority shifts usually associated with the change of a guiding policy paradigm, while also helping to formulate policies that generate public support. While allowing many experts a sense of involvement in policy-making, the hollow paradigm does not interfere and complements Russia's protracted and bureaucratic policy-making process.



## References:

- Aslund, A., 2013, Sergey Glazyev and the revival of Soviet economics, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 5, pp. 375–386
- Auer, S., 2015, Carl Schmitt in the Kremlin: the Ukraine Crisis and the Return of Geopolitics, *International Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 5, pp. 953–968
- Blyth, M., 2013, Paradigms and paradox: the politics of economic ideas in two moments of crisis, *Governance*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 197-215
- Brown, A., 1996, *The Gorbachev Factor*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Bunce, V., 1981, *Do New Leaders Make a Difference: Executive Succession and Public Policy under Capitalism and Socialism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Butrin, D., 2016, Ekonomicheskiy sovet skreplion liubov'yu, *Kommersant*, N. 88, 23 May, p. 2
- Butrin, D., 2017, V spokoynom utroennom tempe, *Kommersant*, N. 95, 31 May, p. 1
- Butrin, D., 2017b, Posledniy vagon v normal'nost', *Kommersant*, N. 96, 1 June, p.1
- Connolly, 2013, Economic growth and strategies for economic development in Russia, *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 133, pp. 5–9
- Cook, L. J., 2007, *Postcommunist Welfare States: Reform Politics in Russia and Eastern Europe*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press
- Cooper, J., 2012, *Reviewing Russian Strategic Planning: the Emergence of Strategy 2020*, Rome: NATO Defense College, Research Review
- Dawisha, K., 2014, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* New York: Simon & Schuster
- Dean, L. A., 2017, The diffusion of human trafficking policies in the post-Soviet Region: a comparative analysis of policy adoption in Ukraine, Latvia and Russia, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, Vol. 19, No. 5, pp. 403-418
- Dezhina, I., 2013, Professional'nye obshchestva v Amerikanskoy nauke: polezniy opyt dlia Rossii?, *Ekonomicheskaya Politika*, No. 5, pp. 150–167
- Duckett, J. and Wang, G., 2017, Why do authoritarian regimes provide public goods? Policy communities, external shocks and ideas in China's rural social policy making, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 1, pp: 92-109
- Evans, A. B., 2012, Protests and civil society in Russia: the struggle for the Khimki Forest, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 3-4, pp. 233-242
- Evans, P., 1995, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Falleti, T. G., 2010, Infiltrating the state, in Mahoney, J. and Thelen, K. (eds), *Explaining Institutional Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 38-62
- Feklyunina, V. and White, S., 2011, Discourses of 'Krizis': economic crisis in Russia and regime legitimacy, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 3–4, pp. 385-406
- Fortescue, S., 2010, Institutionalisation and personalism in the policy-making process of the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia, in Fortescue, S. (ed.), *Russian Politics from Lenin to Putin*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21-50
- Fortescue, S., 2016, Russia's "turn to the east": a study in policy making, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 32, No.5, pp. 423–454
- Gandhi, J., 2008, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Gel'man V., 2016, The Vicious Circle of Post-Soviet Neopartimonalism, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 5, pp. 455-473
- Gel'man V., 2018, Politics vs. Policy: Technocratic Traps of Russia's Policy Reforms, *Russian Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 282-304
- George, A. L. and Bennett, A., 2005, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press

- Gromov, A. and Kurichev, N., 2014, The energy strategy of Russia for the period up to 2030: risks and opportunities, in Oxinstierna, S. and Tynkkynen, V-P. (eds), *Russian Energy and Security up to 2030*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 16–40
- Hale, H. E., 2015, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- Hall, P. A., 1993, Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: the case of economic policymaking in Britain, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 275–296
- Hough, J.F., 1971, The party apparatchiki, in Skillin, H.G. and Griffiths, F. (eds.), *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Howlett, M., Ramesh, M. and Perl, A., 2009, *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Huskey, E., 2009, The politics-administration nexus in post-communist Russia, in Rowney, D. K. and Huskey, E. (eds), *Russian Bureaucracy and the State: Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 253-272
- Hutchings, S. and Tolz, V., 2015, *Nation, Ethnicity and Race on Russian Television*, Abingdon: Routledge
- INSOR, 2011, *Obretenie Buduyushchego. Strategiya 2012*, Moskva: INSOR, available at [http://www.insor-russia.ru/files/Finding\\_of\\_the\\_Future%20FULL .pdf](http://www.insor-russia.ru/files/Finding_of_the_Future%20FULL.pdf), accessed May 2016
- Khamraev, V., 2015, Grazhdanskiy forum gotov k dialogu s vlast'u, *Kommersant*, No. 211, 17 November, p. 6
- Khamraev, V., 2016a, Aleksei Kudrin vykhodit na obshchii plan, *Kommersant*, No. 73, 27 April, p. 3
- Khamraev, V., 2016b, Aleksei Kudrin gotovit predlozheniya vysokoy stepeni soglasovannosti, *Kommersant*, No. 98, 6 June, p. 3
- Khmelnitskaya, M., 2015, *The Policy-Making Process and Social Learning in Russia: the Case of Housing Policy*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Khmelnitskaya, M., 2017, Tools of Government for Russian Development: the Case of Housing Policy, *Russian Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 307-333
- Koesel, K. and Bunce, V., 2012, Putin, popular protests, and political trajectories in Russia: a comparative perspective, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 403–423
- Kosareva, N. B., Polidi, T. D. and Puzanov, A. S., 2015, *Zhilishchnaya Politika i Ekonomika v Rossii: Resul'taty i Strategia Razvitiya*, Moscow: NIU VShE
- Kriuchkova, E. and Butrin, D., 2016, Vse vernulos' na drugi svoya, *Kommersant*, N. 175, 22 September, p. 1
- Kriuchkova, E. 2017, MinEkonomiki govorit, no ne pokazyvayet, *Kommersant*, N. 72, 25 April, p. 2
- Kudrin, A., 2017, Piat' opasnykh mifov, *Kommersant*, No. 88, 22 May, p. 1
- Kulmala, M., Kainu, M., Nikula, J. and Kivinen, M., 2014, Paradoxes of agency: democracy and welfare in Russia, *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 523–552
- Kulmala, M., Rasell, M. and Chernova, Zh., 2017, Overhauling Russia's child welfare system: institutional and ideational factors behind the paradigm shift, *Journal of Social Policy Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3., pp. 353-366
- Kuzminov, Ya. I., Ovcharova, L. N., Yakobson, L. I. (eds), 2015, *Social Policy: Long-term Trends and Recent Changes*, Moscow: NIU VShE
- Lee, C.W., 2015, *Do-It-Yourself Democracy: the Rise of the Public Engagement Industry*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Linz, j. 2000, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, London: Lynne Rienner
- Makarov, V., 2011, Al'ternativa est', i ona dolzhna byt' slyshna, in *Strategiya 2020: Osoboye Minenie. Materialy Kruglogo Stola*, Moscow: Nauchnyi Ekspert, pp. 59–62

- Maleva, T.M., Avraamova, E.M., Gurvich, E.T., Zubarevich, N.B. and Poliakova, A.G., 2015, *Dolgosrochnaya Kontseptsiya Social'noy Politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii do 2015 goda*, Moskva: RANKhiGS, available at: <ftp://ftp.repec.org/opt/ReDIF/RePEc/rmp/ppaper/mn2.pdf>
- Mann, M., 1984, The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results, *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 185–213
- Mehdiyeva, N., 2011, *The Three Ds: Development, Diversion and Diversification*, NATO Defense College, Research Review
- Monaghan, A., 2013, Putin's Russia: shaping a 'grand strategy'?, *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 5, pp. 1221–1236
- Monaghan, A., 2014, *Defibrillating the Vertikal? Putin and Russian Grand Strategy*, Chatham House, Research Paper, October 2014, available at [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field\\_document/20141024DefibrillatingVertikal.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20141024DefibrillatingVertikal.pdf)
- Nikolaeva, D., 2016, "Strategiya rosta" obrela novye steny, *Kommersant-online*, 21 December
- Nikolaeva, D. and Butrin, D., 2017, Strategiya prosto, *Kommersant*, N. 36, 2 March, p. 1
- Oliver, M. J., and Pemberton, H., 2004, Learning and change in 20<sup>th</sup> century British economic policy, *Governance*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 415–441
- Olson, M., 1993, Democracy, dictatorship and development, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 567-576
- Orekhin, P., 2016, Kogo slushaet president, *Gazeta.ru*, 25 August, <https://www.gazeta.ru/business/2016/08/22/10152743.shtml>
- Ortung, R. W. and Zhemukhov, S., 2014, The 2014 Sochi Olympic mega-project and Russia's political economy, *East European Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 175–191
- Owen, C. and Bindman, E. 2017, Civic Participation in a Hybrid Regime: Limited Pluralism in Policymaking and Delivery in Contemporary Russia, *Government and Opposition*, pp. 1-23, [doi:10.1017/gov.2017.13](https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2017.13)
- Oxinstierna, S. and Tynkkynen, V-P., 2014, Introduction, in Oxinstierna, S. and Tynkkynen, V-P. (eds), *Russian Energy and Security up to 2030*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 1–15
- Pomerantsev, P., 2015, *Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: Adventures in Modern Russia*, London: Faber & Faber
- Remington, T., 2011, *The Politics of Inequality in Russia*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- Remington, T., 2018, Institutional Change in Authoritarian Regimes: Pension Reform in Russia and China, *Problems of Post-Communism*, DOI: [10.1080/10758216.2018.1450154](https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2018.1450154)
- Remington, T. F., Soboleva, I., Sobovev, A. and Urnov, M., 2013, Economic and social policy trade-offs in the Russian regions: evidence from four case studies, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 65, No. 10, pp. 1855-1976
- Robertson, G. B., 2011, *The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- Rowney, D. K. and Huskey, E., 2009, Introduction: Russian officialdom since 1881, in Rowney, D. K. and Huskey, E. (eds), *Russian Bureaucracy and the State: Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-16
- Sakwa, R., 2010, The dual state in Russia, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 185-206
- Schmidt, V. A., 2008, Discursive institutionalism: the explanatory power of ideas and discourse, *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 11, pp: 303-326
- Shevchenko, K., 2016, Dmitriy Medvedev vstretilsia s Alekseem Kudrinym, *Kommersant-online*, 21 September, available at <http://www.kommersant.ru/Doc/3095272>
- Sheviakov, A., 2011, V sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoy sfere nuzhny kontseptual'nye razvoroty, in *Strategiya 2020: Osoboye Minenie. Materialy Kruglogo Stola*, Moscow: Nauchnyi Ekspert, pp. 54–58
- Shleifer, A., and Treisman, D., 2000, *Without a Map: Political Tactics and Economic Reform in Russia*, MIT Press

- Skilling, H.G., 1970, Leadership and group conflict in Czechoslovakia, in Farrell, R.B. (ed.), *Political Leadership in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, Chicago: Aldine
- Skokova, Y., Pape, U. and Krasnopolskaya, I., 2018, The non-profit sector in today's Russia: between confrontation and co-optation, *Europe-Asia Studies*, [DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2018.1447089](https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2018.1447089)
- Smertina, P., 2015, Sergei Guriev – chelovek s khoroshimi svyaziami, *Kommersant FM*, 03 November, 15:54
- Starodubstsev, A., 2018, *Federalism and Regional Policy in Contemporary Russia*, London: Routledge
- Sulakshin, S., 2011, O novoy modeli ekonomicheskogo rosta Rossii, in *Strategiya 2020: Osoboye Mnenie. Materialy Kruglogo Stola*, Moscow: Nauchnyi Ekspert, pp. 5–53
- Sutela, P., 2012, *The Political Economy of Putin's Russia*, London: Routledge
- Svolik, M.W., 2012, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- Taylor, B., 2014, The Police Reform in Russia: Policy Process in a Hybrid Regime, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 2–3, pp. 226–255
- Truex, R., 2017, Consultative authoritarianism and its limits, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 329–361
- Wengle, S., 2015, *Post-Soviet Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- White, D., 2015, Political opposition in Russia: the challenges of mobilisation and the political – civil society nexus, *East European Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 314–325
- Zavisca, J., 2012, *Housing the New Russia*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press
- Zweynert, J. and Boldyrev, I., 2017, Conflicting patterns of thought in the Russian debate on modernisation and innovation 2008–2013, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 6, pp. 921–939