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Formation of modern regional judiciary in Russia: a case study of courts of general jurisdiction of Novosibirsk Oblast

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Abstract. This study outlines results of the study on regional judiciary conducted in the Novosibirsk Oblast and summarizes analysis on its socio-demographic and professional composition and sources of formation. The study is interdisciplinary in nature; sociological (questionnaires and in-depth interviews) and legal research methods (historical and legal, formal legal, comparative legal) have been applied, 192 judges of courts of general jurisdiction of the Novosibirsk Oblast have been interviewed during the research. The analysis *of the outcome of the study* shows that a modern regional judge is a young woman who received a full-time legal education at a classical university and has a predominant professional experience in court. The study acknowledges further rejuvenation and feminization of the regional judiciary, due to specifics of personnel policy. The dominant source of replenishment of the regional corps of judges is the court apparatus; this method is most significant for the formation of justices of the peace (JPs) and judges of district courts. The main reasons for the predominance of representatives from the court apparatus in the judiciary corps are the scope of work and requirements for the professional qualities of a judge, among which adaptability to high workloads, significant amount of paperwork, control over procedural deadlines, and effective compliance with the key indicators of the judge's work form the core. We believe that the trend to form the judiciary mainly through internal sources may negatively affect the authority and status of the judicial profession.

Key words: judge, the judiciary, sources of formation, judicial system, court staff, professional qualities of a judge, legal education

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**Формирование современного регионального
судейского корпуса в России:
на примере судов общей юрисдикции Новосибирской области**

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Аннотация. Основная цель – проанализировать результаты исследования о региональном судейском корпусе, проведенном в Новосибирской области, обобщить материалы о его социально-демографическом, профессиональном составех и источниках формирования. Исследование носит междисциплинарный характер, при его проведении использовались социологические (анкетирование и углубленные интервью) и юридические методы исследования (историко-правовой, формально-юридический, сравнительно-правовой), в исследовании приняли участие 192 судьи судов общей юрисдикции Новосибирской области. Анализ результатов исследования показывает, что современный региональный судья – это молодая женщина, получившая юридическое образование в классическом университете на очной форме обучения, имеющая преимущественный профессиональный опыт работы в аппарате суда. В исследовании констатируется углубление процессов омоложения и феминизации регионального судейского корпуса, обусловленного особенностями кадровой политики. Доминирующим источником пополнения регионального корпуса судей стал аппарат суда, наиболее значим этот способ для формирования составов мировых судей и судей районных судов. Главными причинами преобладания выходцев из аппарата суда в судейском корпусе стали содержание работы и требования, предъявляемые к профессиональным качествам судьи, среди которых преобладают адаптивность к высоким нагрузкам, значительному объему работы с документами, контролю над процессуальными сроками, эффективному соблюдению основных показателей работы судьи. Углубление тенденции формирования судейского корпуса преимущественно аппаратным способом за счет внутренних источников может негативно повлиять на авторитет и статус судейской профессии.

Ключевые слова: судья, судейский корпус, источники формирования, судебная система, аппарат суда, профессиональные качества судьи, юридическое образование

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Introduction

The judicial authority, asserting the principles of the rule of law and justice and being the key factor in ensuring the rights and protection of interests of citizens, imposes special

requirements on its bearers. The quality of administration of justice, authority of the judiciary and each individual judge, determines the formation of respect to the law and trust in the judicial system. Over the past two decades, the judiciary in Russia has attracted the keenest interest of domestic and foreign authors, becoming the subject of interdisciplinary research. First, let us highlight the works of jurists analyzing the institutional, organizational and legal aspects of the formation of the judiciary. For instance, the works of M.I. Kleandrov, G.T. Yermoshin, pay considerable attention to the issues of legislative consolidation of the status of judge in Russia, effectiveness of the organizational and legal mechanism for selecting candidates for judicial positions and vesting them with judicial powers, and methods for assessing their professionalism (Kleandrov, 2009; 2019; Yermoshin, 2015; 2017). The legal literature extensively analyzes the institutional features of domestic and foreign judiciary formation, identifies differences in this process, and highlights problems that require improvement (Burdin, 2014; 2015; Daminev, 2021; Klyukin, 2015; Kornakova & Shcherbakova, 2019; Orlov, 2017; Vlasova, 2008).

The professional level of the judiciary has become one of the most relevant topics of personnel research in recent years. This issue is investigated through the prism of legal education and principles of *judicial corporation* formation. V.V. Zakharov, T.N. Ilyina, A.A. Dorskaya, D.O. Serov examine formation of legal education in Russia, challenges and achievements of personnel training for the judicial system in a historical retrospect (Ilyina, 2019; Dorskaya, 2013; Serov, 2013; Zakharov & Ilyina, 2012). Modern issues of legal personnel training and selecting candidates for the position of a judge are looked at in the works of T.V. Faroi, V.A. Telegina, O. Shepeleva, and A. Novikova (Faroi, 2019; Telegina, 2020; Shepeleva, Novikova, 2013).

The specifics of formation and professional characteristics of the judiciary are in the focus of interdisciplinary scientific teams of lawyers and sociologists. The Institute for the Rule of Law at the European University at St. Petersburg conducted a comprehensive study of the judiciary based on a nationwide survey of judges in 2011 and 2013. Its generalization allows to reconstruct a “portrait” of the contemporary Russian judiciary, analyze the sources of its formation, career trajectories, values, and professional culture of judges (Volkov, Dmitrieva, Pozdnyakov & Titaev, 2012; 2015; Volkov & Dmitrieva, 2015). The studies have determined the influence of the sources of judiciary formation on the accelerated process of feminization of the profession and value norms of the emerging corporation.

The sources of formation and gender structure of the judiciary are the topics of current independent research. Analysis of the materials of qualification collegiums of judges by A. Dmitrieva and D. Saveliev shows the increasing role of court apparatuses as the sources of replenishment of the judiciary and “predominance of general bureaucratic professional values in characterizing candidates” (Dmitrieva & Saveliev, 2018). The gender structure of the judiciary has been studied by E. Ivanova. The author concludes that the judicial profession in Russia is a rare example of successful feminization; the reasons for female predominance in the judiciary can be explained by recruitment policies (Ivanova, 2015: 580–591).

Despite extensive nationwide studies of the judiciary, the regional specifics of the formation and activities of the judiciary remain virtually unstudied. One of the rare examples of such research is the study of the corps of justices of the peace (JPs) in Kaliningrad Oblast (Lonskaya, Fadeeva & Plotnikova, 2021a; 2021b). In addition to the general characteristics of JP group under study, the researchers analyze their professional

values, the influence of the formation process on their values that determine their activities. The scholars come to the conclusion about the unity of the values of JPs with the Russian judicial community and the dominance of normative (statutory) values in the corporate culture (Lonskaya, Fadeeva & Plotnikova, 2021a:5).

Foreign researchers are less interested in the legal aspects of the judiciary formation: in their studies they rely on the established traditions of judicial research in European countries and the United States, primarily focusing on personnel policy, process of the judiciary formation, court management system, system of accountability of Russian judges, and limits of judicial independence (Schwartz & Sykiainen, 2012; Solomon & Foglesong, 2000; Solomon, 2008; 2012). The formation of Russian judiciary community is considered in the context of European practices, feminization and bureaucratization processes typical for other continental European countries (Kuhn, 2004; Schwartz & Sykiainen, 2012; Solomon, 2012). The fragmentary and irrelevant nature of the data used often prevents foreign researchers from being able to determine the impact of institutional and organizational changes on the professional community and Russian judicial practice.

Despite the outstanding achievements in the study of institutional, organizational and legal issues of judiciary formation, as well as its social and professional characteristics, the regional specifics of the formation and activities of the judiciary, which affect administration of justice, remain understudied. This article aims at addressing a number of the above-mentioned gaps in the study of the judiciary in Russia, on the example of one of the regions.

The Department of Theory and History of State and Law of the Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management together with the Novosibirsk Regional Court conducted the study of the judiciary of Novosibirsk Oblast in 2021–2022. Its general purpose was to study the formation process, the main sociodemographic and professional characteristics, and identify challenges within the regional judiciary. The study was conducted in two stages: the first stage included a survey of judges (April 29, 2021–May 15, 2021), the second stage included in-depth (non-standardized) interviews with judges (February 01, 2022–July 15, 2022). The first stage was aimed at assessing the judges' attitudes to the key issues of judicial activities. These included the sources of formation of the judiciary, the reasons to join the profession, the opportunities to move up the career ladder, the judges' assessment of the substantive (professional) aspects of their work, working conditions, and judges' assessment by the legal community and external environment.

Judges of the three tiers of courts of general jurisdiction of Novosibirsk Oblast, i.e., justices of the peace, district court judges, and regional court judges, were chosen as the target group at the first stage. The study involved 192 participants (42.47% of the total number of judges at the time of research that spread between JPs (31.8%), district court judges (52.6%), regional court judges (9.9%) and heads of courts (5.7%). The distribution by official position corresponds to the general ratio of judges in the Novosibirsk Oblast judicial corps, which allows to speak about representativeness of the sample and high reliability of its results.

The second stage was conducted from February to August 2022 among the judges, who had previously participated in the survey (10 judges took part in the interview, including two JPs, four judges of general jurisdiction (from courts located in the city of Novosibirsk and rural districts), two judges of Novosibirsk regional court and two heads of courts). The main purpose of the individual interviews was to deepen the research, to clarify

positions on issues that provoked polar opinions in the standardized survey, to reveal individual attitudes to the judicial candidate selection system, career plans, attitudes to changes in the judicial system, workload of judges, etc.

Overall, this publication summarizes materials related to socio-demographic characteristics and specifics of the regional judiciary formation.

Demographic characteristics of the judiciary

The predominance of women among judges in Novosibirsk Oblast (78.6%) reaffirms the national and European trend toward feminization of judicial profession. The growth in the number of women in the judiciary is taking place against the background of mass entry of women into the legal profession worldwide, and this trend is particularly pronounced in countries where there has been a significant increase in the number of lawyers in general, most often driven by women (Eastern Europe and Russia).

According to the study conducted by the Institute for the Rule of Law at the European University in 2011–2013, the share of female judges at the time amounted to 65%, as opposed to 44% in the Soviet people's courts in 1990¹. In the countries of both Eastern and Western Europe, there is also an increase in the share of female judges. In 2010 the average share of women in the courts of various European countries comprised 48% (Kuhn, 2004:549), but in Serbia, Slovenia, Latvia and Romania it exceeded 70%, in Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary - 60–65%, in the Netherlands - 75%, in France - 54%, and in Finland - 46%². The issue of the causes and consequences of the legal profession and judiciary feminization is the subject of heated debates in the domestic and foreign literature.

The most common view on the reasons for change in the gender structure of judges in foreign literature is based on the prestige hypothesis: “the share of women in the judicial chair and the overall level of prestige of the judicial profession are inversely proportional” (Kuhn, 2004:550). Researchers confirm this hypothesis with the experience of several European countries and the United States; for example, in Eastern Europe, where the prestige and income of judges was low, the proportion of women increased. In common law countries, the situation is the opposite: the high prestige of the profession and the significant influence of informal ties in selection of judges constrain female recruitment. In England, women make up 23% of the total number of judges, in Ireland - 30%, in Canada - 33%, and in the United States - about 30% (Schultz & Shaw, 2013:7–14).

In Russia, however, the “prestige hypothesis” does not explain feminization of the judiciary; in the 2000s, the increase in the share of women occurred against the background of growth of the prestige and income of the judicial profession (Ivanova, 2015: 591). Scholars attribute this trend primarily to the peculiarities of the formation of the judiciary and the specifics of the job: abundance of routine work, heavy workload, and low mobility (Volkov & Dmitrieva, 2015:123). It appears that the reasons for predominance of women in the judiciary in Russia have been correctly identified by the researchers; they rest in the principles of selection and appointment of judges and are not related to the prestige of this profession. Moreover, the previously recorded tendency of decreasing female share in hierarchically higher courts (“vertical gender segregation”) (Volkov & Dmitrieva, 2015:124; Ivanova, 2015:583) is not observed at the regional level. The study conducted in Novosibirsk Oblast shows an equal distribution of men and women on judicial positions

¹ National Economy of the USSR in 1990. Statistical Yearbook 1991. Moscow, Finance and Statistics.

² European Judicial System, 2014, p. 32.

at all levels of courts (among justices of the peace, judges of district courts, the Novosibirsk Regional Court, and heads of courts, the share of men is 23–27%).

Among other trends in the demographic characteristics of the judiciary in Russia, we should note the rejuvenation of its composition. Earlier studies argue that “Russian judges are a fairly young professional group” (Volkov, Dmitrieva, Pozdnyakov & Titaev, 2012:11); according to scholars, the median age of a Russian judge in 2013–2014 was 43 years (Volkov & Dmitrieva, 2015: 97). These observations are confirmed at the regional level: the median age of a judge in Novosibirsk Oblast is 41.6 years; the group of judges aged 36–45 years dominates, making up almost two-thirds of respondents (57.9%). The high prestige of the profession and effective recruitment among young lawyers is demonstrated by the impressive number of young judges under the age of 35; they comprise 18.4% of the total number of judges. A large portion of them are JPs. Among the heads of courts and judges of the Novosibirsk Regional Court, the group of judges over 45 years of age prevails, while this group accounts for less than a quarter of the judiciary (23.6%).

Table 1

Age of judges in Novosibirsk Oblast

Age groups	Share of judges, %
25–30 years	0.9
31–35 years	17.5
36–40 years	31
41–45 years	26.9
46–50 years	12.3
51–60 years	11.1
Older than 60	0.3
Total	100

The data of the regional survey also reveals a trend of further rejuvenation of the judiciary: while in 2011, judges under 40 years old amounted to almost a third of all judges (30.8%), in Novosibirsk Oblast in 2021 they made up a half (49.4%). There is also a significant decrease in the share of judges over 50 years old (in our study, there are only 11.4% of such judges; in the study by St. Petersburg researchers, they comprise 35.6%). According to the judges themselves, the decrease in the share of judges in older age groups is due to the growing workload and the desire to retire upon reaching the required length of service.

The average age of judicial appointment has also dropped; while in 2011 in Russia it was 34 years, and in 2021 in Novosibirsk region it was 31.5 years. The indicators associated with age have also demonstrated a drop, i.e., length of judicial service and length of service in the position. The average length of service among judges in Novosibirsk Oblast is 10.8 years; almost half of the judiciary are young judges with less than 10 years of experience (46.4%), while experienced judges with over 20 years of service are in the minority (12.3%).

The length of service in the judicial position characterizes the vertical mobility of the judiciary, but also confirms the predominance of young judges with little experience. The average length of service is 6.8 years; 48.3% of judges have three to ten years of experience, and a quarter of them have up to three years of service. Given the necessary requirements for the age and length of service of applicants for a judicial position, the process of rejuvenation of the judiciary has actually reached its limit.

Judicial experience in Novosibirsk Oblast

Total length of service as a judge	Share of judges, %
Up to one year	0.5
One to three years	11.8
Three to ten years	34.1
10 to 20 years	41.3
More than 20 years	12.3
Total	100

Professional training of judges

Professional legal education is the most important element of judge's training and professional socialization. Scholars assert that the current state of judicial training is under the influence of the previous historical period with its challenges (Shepeleva, Novikova, 2013:15). The Soviet judicial system was characterized throughout its entire history by an acute shortage of legally educated personnel and predominance of individuals with correspondence degree among judges. In 1931, the share of persons with a law degree among the regional judges was only 33%³; in 1951, 58% of judges had legal education (with only 20% having a higher education in law), and only by the beginning of 1980s, the predominant Soviet judges had higher legal education (Serov, 2013:81). The long-term lack of educational qualifications for judges, which were introduced only shortly before the collapse of the USSR⁴, and the low prestige of the profession in the Soviet years did not contribute to the quality of legal training of judges. Fundamental changes in the training of personnel for the modern judicial system were due to its reforms in the 1990s–2000s, which contributed to raising the prestige of the profession, and the requirements for training. The qualification requirements for judges to have a higher legal education are set forth in the Constitution of Russia and the Law of the Russian Federation on the Status of Judges in the Russian Federation dated June 26, 1992.⁵ In 2015, the educational requirements were specified: a candidate for a judicial position must have a higher legal education or a bachelor's or master's degree in Jurisprudence⁶. M. I. Kleandrov explains the higher requirements for judicial qualification by “the need for in-depth and time-consuming study of various branches of law” (Kleandrov, 2019:8).

As a result of the rejection of the people's court model and professionalization of the judiciary, the issue of the educational qualifications of judges moved into the area of the quality of legal education. The 1990s and 2000s witnessed a real boom in the development of legal programs in Russia, transition from training mainly by correspondence and evening classes to full-time legal education, emergence and development of law departments in both classical and industry-specific universities. A nationwide survey conducted in

³ Justice personnel. Soviet justice. 1932. No. 3. P. 40-42.

⁴ Law of the USSR dated August 4, 1989. On the Status of Judges in the USSR // Bulletin of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. 1989. No. 9. Art. 223.

⁵ Law of the Russian Federation No. 3132-I dated June 26, 1992, On the Status of Judges in the Russian Federation. Bulletin of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation and the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. 1992. No. 30. Art. 1792.

⁶ Law of the Russian Federation No. 3132-1 dated June 26, 1992, On the Status of Judges in the Russian Federation. Bulletin of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation and the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. 1992. No. 30. Art. 1792.

2011–2013 showed that most representatives of the judiciary are educated at law faculties of classical universities (69%), 22.9% in specialized law schools, and 7.6% in industry-specific universities (Volkov, Dmitrieva, Pozdnyakov & Titaev, 2015: 83–84). Scholars note a gradual decrease in the number of graduates of classical universities among judges and an increase in graduates of industry-specific universities; a rise in the share of full-time graduates among judges and a decrease in part-time graduates, especially among young judges has also been identified (Volkov, Dmitrieva, Pozdnyakov & Titaev, 2015:86–87). These all-Russian trends are also fully characteristic of the education of judges in Novosibirsk Oblast.

Table 3

Professional education of judges in Novosibirsk Oblast

Higher institutions where the judges were educated	Share of judges, %
Law faculties of classical universities	73.5
Industry-specific universities (incl. academies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs)	14.1
Law faculties of universities for economics and civil service academies	8.3
Law faculties of non-profile universities (engineering, agrarian)	4.1
Total	100

The majority of judges in Novosibirsk Oblast had a law course in classical universities (73.5%), with a dominant position occupied by graduates of Tomsk State University (Novosibirsk branch); they comprise 64.5% of the total amount of acting judges. Predominance of graduates of Tomsk State University is largely due to the specifics of legal education formation in Novosibirsk and lack of a law faculty at Novosibirsk State University (classical university of the region) for a long time. There is a noticeable increasing tendency to attract greater number of graduates of other classical universities in the region. As for the remaining judges, 9.3% of them received higher education in specialized law schools, 4.8% in academies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 8.3% in economics universities and civil service academies, and the smallest number of judges (4.1%) graduated from law branches of non-profile universities (engineering and agrarian). Judges were mostly full-time and part-time students (83.2%), and less than a fifth completed a correspondence course. According to the Novosibirsk Oblast Judge Qualification Examination Board, the number of graduates of law faculties of classical universities applying for the Qualifying Exam for the position of judge is gradually reducing, while the number of graduates of industry-specific universities and the number of full-time graduates is growing. On the whole, the analysis of the situation regarding the professional education of judges shows that modern Russian judges have received a high-quality legal education mainly on a full-time basis, and the problem of a shortage of trained legal personnel, which was acute in the Soviet era, was successfully resolved in the 2000s.

Sources of the judiciary formation

Domestic and foreign researchers are unanimous in their opinion that the principles and sources of judicial recruitment are predominantly determined by the type of legal system and national specifics (Volkov, Dmitrieva, Pozdnyakov & Titaev, 2015:112; Burdin, 2015:371; Schultz, 2003:279; Kuhn, 2004:549). Whereas for common law countries, becoming a judge is “the pinnacle of the legal profession” and is only possible with extensive and diverse legal experience, in most continental European countries the

choice of the judicial profession takes place at the early stages of legal practice and education, and lawyers who chooses the judicial profession acquire relevant skills and maintain a “high degree of loyalty to their professional career” (Schultz, 2003:281).

The Soviet-era experience of recruiting the judiciary had a significant specificity: the determining factor was not professional competence, but loyalty to the ruling party (party membership) and social origin. The judicial reform of the early 2000s introduced major changes to the system; it involved rejecting the concept of people's courts, higher prestige of the judicial profession and higher salaries and social guarantees, which attracted lawyers with various professional experiences. During this period, recruiting principles became similar to those of common law countries, and the post of judge was then viewed as “the pinnacle of the legal profession.”

What trends characterize regional judicial recruitment? The main source of replenishment of judges in Novosibirsk Oblast in 2021 is the court staff (62%), the second source is the Prosecutor's Office (13.5%). 8.3% of judges come from law enforcement agencies (mostly from the investigative and operational bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Investigative Committee) and 6.7% come from state and municipal administration. Judges with experience in the corporate sector and advocacy are in the minority (2% and 4.3% respectively). Experience in doctrinal understanding of the law (law school professors) is the least sought after by the judiciary, with only 1.6% of judges having such experience.

A comparative analysis with the all-Russian data cited in the 2013 study shows a twofold increase in the role of the court staff in the judiciary formation in 2021, and the declining role of all other sources of judicial personnel. According to the study, in 2013, the share of the court system in the formation of the judiciary comprised 30.3%, a fifth of the judges were recruited from the Prosecutor's Office (20.8%); moreover, law enforcement agencies (17.5%), corporate sector and advocacy (16.5%) and state administration (10.1%) also played a significant role in the formation of the judiciary (Volkov & Dmitrieva, 2015:101-103). Even more revealing is the comparison of the sources of judiciary formation with the data for 1997; in 2021, there is a sixfold increase of those who came from the court staff (from 11.4 to 62%), and an almost fivefold decrease in the share of those who came from the corporate sector and advocacy (from 28, 2 to 6.2%) (Solomon & Foglesong, 2000: 97).

In fact, the regional level witnesses a washout of external sources of replenishment of the judiciary. The only significant source of judicial formation is the court apparatus, with more than 70% of newly appointed judges in 2019–2020 being advanced from the position of judge assistants. Traditionally important sources of judicial recruitment in the 1990s and early 2000s, the Prosecutor's Office and investigative agencies, ceased to be so. Legal professional associations and law firms have stopped supplying the judiciary with personnel altogether.

It is worth noting that there are certain gender differences in the professional recruitment of judges: male judges have more diverse professional experience than female judges. The share of women with previous court experience is almost twice as high as that of men (68% vs. 37%). Adversely, the number of employees from the Prosecutor's Office, law enforcement and investigative agencies among men comprise 20% of former prosecutors, 14% of law enforcement officers and 12% of counsel against 13% of former prosecutors, 7% of law enforcement officers and 2% of counsels among women.

Significant differentiation in prior professional experience is observed among judges of different job categories. The largest number of former court employees (75.4%) is among justices of the peace; the role of the court staff in the formation of district courts (62.8%) and heads of courts (63.6%) is also high, whereas the smallest number of former employees from the court apparatus is among judges of the regional court (15.8%). At the same time, regional court judges demonstrate the most diverse sources of formation: a significant number of judges have had previous experience in the Prosecutor's Office (26.3%), law enforcement and investigative bodies (26.3%), executive authorities (10.5%), universities (10.5%), and advocacy (5.2%). The experience of JPs is the least varied: only 8.2% are former employees of the Prosecutor's Office, 8.6% worked for executive state bodies and 3.3% for law enforcement agencies, while the remaining three quarters come from the court system. Significant differences in the sources of recruitment of different job categories are determined by the different times of entry into the judicial system and reflect the evolution of selection principles. Justices of the peace are the initial step in the career; most of them were appointed in the last 5–7 years, and they are mostly selected from the system. Regional judges engaged in the judicial system 15–20 years ago and most of them had a different legal experience before being appointed as judges.

Table 4

Judicial experience prior to appointment as a judge (by job categories, %)

Predominant professional experience prior to appointment as a judge	Justices of the peace (JPs)	District court judges	Heads of courts	Regional court judges	Among the entire judiciary
Court staff	75.4	62.9	63.6	15.8	62.1
Prosecutor's Office	8.2	15.5	9.1	26.3	13.5
Law enforcement agencies (including investigation)	3.2	7.2	18.2	26.3	8.3
Public administration bodies	3.2	5.2	0	10.5	4.7
Municipal authorities	3.2	2	0	0	2
Corporate lawyer	1.7	2	0	5.3	2
Counsel	1.7	4.2	9.1	5.3	4.2
University professor	1.7	0	0	10.5	1.6
Not clarified	1.7	1	0	0	1.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100

What are the reasons for prevalence of judges from the judicial system? V. Volkov and A. Dmitrieva formulate the hypothesis of an “implicit contract” concluded by a judge with the system and related to the career growth prospect: with low income and high workload, court secretaries and assistant judges gain professional experience and necessary skills with a clear prospect of becoming a judge. In such a situation, career advancement in the judicial system becomes some kind of gratitude for hard and low-paid work in the court system. But in addition to gratitude and informal connections gained in court, this *implicit contract* is transformed into the criteria and principles of professional selection: only the experience gained in the court system becomes valuable (Volkov & Dmitrieva, 2015:104-112).

We agree with our colleagues that the preferential recruitment from the court staff is due to the specific training of judges and formation of the necessary professional qualities. In fact, a system of judicial training has been formed in the court, and the driving motive to work within the court system becomes the opportunity to join the judiciary in the quite foreseeable future. At the same time, the most significant part of this training system is

formation of professional qualities and values required by the judicial system. What should a future judge be prepared for? They should be well adapted to the realities of Russian judicial proceedings: high workload, substantial paperwork, procedural deadlines, compliance with the main indicators of the judge's performance and *quantity and quality of judging*. In this situation, the most valuable is the candidate's court experience, and the most sought-after qualities of a judge are responsibility, discipline, stress resistance and integration into the system, ability to withstand high workloads while maintaining the quality of judicial decisions. The predominance of judges from the system seems quite natural, as they are faster and better adapted; they have already acquired the skills necessary to work as a judge.

Interviews with judges conducted during research show that judges' attitudes to the dominance of internal sources in the formation of the judiciary are complex. Judges who joined the judicial system in the early 2000s and had a different legal background prior to their judicial appointment are rather negative about the change in selection principles; they express concern about the predominance of former court system employees among newly appointed colleagues. Such judges voiced opinions about the lack of diverse legal and *just life experience*, high degree of dependence on the opinion of the presiding judge, and lack of independence and authority in the professional community. On the other hand, judges from the court system, on the contrary, noted the positive aspects of their experience, i.e., the ability to quickly adapt to the workload, performance, and judicial practice during their work in court. One of the judges with previous experience in the Prosecutor's Office admitted that the judges who were appointed at the same time with him and had come from the system "handle the workload better and demonstrate better performance."

Conclusion

The study shows that the portrait of a modern regional judge is a young woman of 41.5 years of age, who received a law degree at a classical university on a full-time basis and has predominant professional experience in the court apparatus. The process of feminization of the judicial profession, characteristic of many European countries, has its own specifics in Russia: it is caused not by a decrease in the prestige of the profession, but by the specifics of the work and sources of its formation. Comparison with earlier studies shows a deepening gender imbalance in the regional judiciary, which is not vertically discriminatory, i.e., men and women are equally distributed across all job categories of judges. The judicial profession in Russia is an example of successful feminization of the profession, where a rise in the number of women in the professional field occurs without lowering the status of the profession itself. Further rejuvenation of the regional judiciary is also explained by the sources of its replenishment; judges under 40 years of age make up about half of its composition, and in the last ten years the number of young judges has increased by 20%, while the number of most experienced judges over 50 years of age with more than 20 years of experience has remarkably decreased.

The analysis of the recruitment sources for the regional judiciary shows that the court staff has become the main one; this method is most significant for the formation of JPs and judges of district courts, while external sources have ceased to play a significant role. The main reasons for the predominance of those from the judiciary apparatus are the content of the work and requirements for the professional qualities of the judge, among which adaptability to high workloads, substantial amount of paperwork, strict compliance with

procedural deadlines, and effective performance indicators of the judge's work dominate. Given that over the last ten years the number of judges has doubled and that there is a further expansion of this trend, the judicial corps in Russia in the coming years will be formed predominantly through the court system from internal sources. If we assess the situation from the perspective of changes in the judicial system over the last 20 years, we can say that there are obvious risks for the judicial system in changing the principles of selection: the legal experience of candidates is becoming less diverse, the training of judges is of mostly apparatus-bureaucratic nature, which may negatively affect credibility and status of the judicial profession. However, assessment of the situation in a longer retrospective shows that after the anomaly of the Soviet period with no professional and educational qualifications and extensive recruitment from the legal community during the judicial reform of the early 2000s, the sources and methods of judicial formation have stabilized, returning to the traditions and standards typical for continental Europe and Russia, and in this sense, the dominance of internal sources of recruiting the judiciary has become quite consistent.

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