

ONE STOP SHOP IN KAZAKHSTAN: BREAKING-UP TRADITIONAL BUREAUCRACY OR A NEW LOOK FOR OLD PRACTICE? ¹

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Abstract

This paper analyses implementation of the New Public Management (NPM) initiative recently introduced in the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) such as a joined-up method of public service delivery called “One Stop Shops” (OSS). Several public services are provided in a single building rather than different government offices in a business-like style of service delivery and in the modern physical environment. The OSS policy is an attempt of the Kazakhstani government to reduce red tape in the civil service and improve quality of public services. The author argues that despite certain progress in terms of improved methods of service provision, the extent to which NPM ideas were imported from developed democracies was limited and constrained by the institutional framework and culture prevailing in Kazakhstani bureaucracy. The OSS reproduced the hierarchical and centralized nature of public service delivery, and followed the traditional pattern of control. The prevailing structure and culture are important constraints on NPM development in transitional countries.

Key words: New Public Management, transitional countries, one stop shop

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main targets of Kazakhstani administrative reform during the last 10 years has been to provide better services for customers and reduce level of corruption.³ Several initiatives were borrowed from the experience of developed countries to improve relationships between citizens and government officials, and quality of public services, and the country could not resist NPM ideas.

The administrative reform has introduced a new public organization, One Stop Shop (OSS) (in Russian called “*Centry obsluzhivaniya naseleniya*”), as an innovative approach to citizen-centred service delivery.⁴ The aim was to bring together a wide range of public services from across government departments to provide citizens with integrated and

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³ Annual Messages of the President of RK N.A.Nazarbayev to the People of Kazakhstan from 2000 to 2009, <http://www.akorda.kz>.

⁴ Government Resolution of RK, 5 January 2007 No. 1 entitled “On Establishment of the State Entities – Public Service Centres of the Ministry of Justice of RK”.

easy-to-access service with the assumption that “*by paying more attention to clients, public service organizations will learn to deliver better results, and that clients will notice the change and experience increased satisfaction*”.⁵

The OSS is an integral component of E-government policy in Kazakhstan which has shown development of the use of informational and communication technologies (ICT) and technological infrastructure of the country.⁶ Kazakhstan is in a much more challenging situation in terms of public service improvement compared to many developed and developing countries on relatively small territories. Given a large territory of the country which is equal in size to the Western Europe, low level of computer literacy of the population (less than 15%) and limited access to Internet, face-to-face customer service still remains a significant access point to the public services, especially for vulnerable groups and inhabitants from rural regions where nearly half of the population lives (43%).

During the period of data collection, December 2006 - December 2008, the OSS provided 25 services of three stakeholder departments: Ministry of Justice (MJ), as a coordinator of reform, Agency for Land Resource Management (ALRM) and Ministry of Defence (MD). Within four years of policy implementation since November 2005 the number of the single-window centres has been rapidly increased from 4 pilots to 300 across regional and village levels employing over 10,000 staff.

The purpose of this paper is to examine implementation of the NPM reform in the traditional and hierarchical bureaucracy of Kazakhstan using the case of the OSS initiative. This paper aims to contribute to the theoretical interpretation of public service changes in the context of managerial reforms in transitional countries which in the academic discourse still remains unexplored.

⁵ Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000, p. 116.

⁶ Presidential Decree of RK, 10 November 2004 No. 1471 entitled “State Programme on E-government Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2005-2007”.

The paper is structured as follows. The different components of NPM are compared with those of the traditional Kazakhstani administration. This framework will guide our analysis of the OSS policy implementation, providing a picture of the extent of the change with particular emphasis on organization of work processes, control of OSS and contradictions of personnel policies. The paper argues that the OSS represent an attempt to reduce the constraints of the civil service system – corruption and poor quality of services. It maintains that the traditional reform approach is challenged by a new approach based on the ideas of NPM, but that is limited in the extent of reform.

The paper raises several issues which are important to analyze:

- 1. How has the traditional bureaucracy adopted the NPM idea of customer-orientation in transitional context?*
- 2. Are the OSS a real innovation or a new look for old ways of service delivery?*
- 3. In what way have the institutional framework and prevailing culture in a system constrained public service modernization?*

The paper concludes that although this is a political attempt to introduce a greater degree of entrepreneurship through new management methods, the extent to which NPM ideas were imported to Kazakhstan from developed democracies was limited and constrained by the institutional framework and culture prevailing in Kazakhstani bureaucracy. The data were collected from interviews, participant observation and extensive documentary analysis.

2. “PICK & MIX” OF NPM IDEAS TO MODERNIZE PUBLIC SERVICES IN KAZAKHSTAN

NPM has undergone many iterations from its conception by Christopher Hood (1991) who described its principal themes as a shift away: from an emphasis on policy towards measurable performance; from reliance on traditional bureaucracies towards loosely coupled, quasi-autonomous units and competitively tendered services; from an emphasis on development and investment towards cost-cutting; from classic command-and-control regulation toward self-regulation; and allowing managers greater “freedom to manage”

according to private sector corporate practice.⁷ NPM calls for a new emphasis focusing on decentralization, flatter hierarchies, contracting out, and systems of co-production or public-private partnerships.⁸ It suggests empowerment of both customers and public employees, customer-driven government that meets the needs of the customer rather than bureaucracy. NPM provides “*a kind of shopping basket for those who wish to modernize the public sector*”.⁹

However, all mentioned characteristics of NPM are in fact the opposite to those of traditional Kazakhstani administration which stresses hierarchical organizational structures with direct monopoly control over the activities of public organizations and service provision. Although there are some efforts made on the way to decentralization, local government itself is still relatively weak and dependent on central government.¹⁰ The legitimization of administrative action comes from its compliance with the law; therefore, legalism is the most important source of power and protection in the administrative system. There is a strong focus on legal and administrative control of inputs rather than outputs and outcomes.

Performance standards have been recently introduced in Kazakhstani public sector adapting the United Kingdom Charter Mark scheme.¹¹ The recent legislation provides some freedom to the political managers in handling financial resources, numbers of staff and introducing performance-related payment, thus, introducing NPM elements of decentralizing management.¹² According to the international surveys Kazakhstan is positioned among highly corrupt countries in the world.¹³

⁷ Summarized in Lynn, 2006, p.107.

⁸ McLaughlin, Osborne and Ferlie, 2002; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000.

⁹ Pollitt, 1995, p.133.

¹⁰ Fiscal Decentralization Initiative for Central and Eastern Europe, 2003, pp.17-21, <http://lgi.osi.hu>.

¹¹ Knox, 2008, p. 489-490.

¹² Presidential Decree of RK, 28 December 2007, No. 501 entitled “On Measures of Optimization of Civil Service Positions.”

¹³ According to the Transparency International survey report the corruption perception index in Kazakhstan in 2008 was 2.2 (where countries with score below 3 are considered to have serious problems with lack of accountability and transparency), Kazakhstan ranks 145 among 180 countries. In the World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (2008) Kazakhstan’s score is 17 out of 100 in the governance indicator “control of corruption”, lagging far behind other former Soviet countries such as Estonia (81), Latvia (66), Lithuania (62).

NPM brings a fundamental challenge to the tradition of public administration in Kazakhstan. The country is under growing pressure from the international community to reduce corruption and modernise public services. This is particularly significant in light of upcoming chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2010. The political leadership of the country has put high expectations on the OSS policy as a panacea from public service failures and corruption. Hence, public service reform in Kazakhstan is driven by the global international trends of NPM, political ambitions and desire to orientate the government to the customers following the best international practice.

3. RESEARCH SITES AND METHODOLOGY

Two OSS that provide access to diverse public services through single-window arrangement were examined. Both case study organizations, launched in November 2005 in the new capital – Astana, were selected as they have accumulated the most experience in service integration compared to other OSS established one-two years later. Each OSS has a manager who is appointed by the Minister of Justice, three deputy managers, two supervisors of the customer service and 25-30 front-line employees.

The OSS are open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 20:00 pm and on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 13:00 pm. Typical OSS physical environment represents a newly built or refurbished building with the workplace roughly split into five sections: customers waiting area, front-line service area, administrative support office, managers' office and additional space for banking, notary, copying and photography services. An electronic system is introduced which enables customers to get a ticket with a number of position in the queue for service application. Priority groups of population, such as pensioners, veterans of the World War II, Afghan War and disabled people, apply for service without queuing. New furniture, coffee-machine, air conditioner, public toilet, TV-screen, polite staff in the uniform make physical environment of the OSS comfortable and user-friendly for customers compared to the less convenient conditions provided at the traditional departments.

Within this environment both case organizations serve around 800 – 1,000 clients on a daily basis. 25 services provided through single-window arrangement can be roughly divided into three areas:

1. *Legal services of the MJ* (16 services): issuing a passport, registration of residence, birth, death, marriage, divorce, registration of property, setting-up a business company etc.
2. *Land services of the ALRM* (4 services): issuing an act of private ownership over a piece of land; permanent/ temporary use of land; temporary free use of land.
3. *Military registration services of the MD* (5 services): record keeping of officers, soldiers and sergeants who are in reserve; issuing a document on entitlement for benefits to the target groups (veterans of the World War II, Afghan war, liquidators of Chernobyl disaster).

The research aim required detailed, empirical data, best collected through in-depth exploration of the issues with the selected participants. An important element of this research is the way the processes and changes have been interpreted by the key players, and primary sources of data have been used to obtain a first hand account of different interpretations:

1. in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 11 OSS managers and 5 senior managers of the MJ who were able to comment on changes and processes;
2. unstructured interviews with 25 front-line employees who shared their values, norms and experiences of customer service;
3. four-week observations in two case organizations which allowed to observe customer service dimensions and interactions in the context of a “setting” which cannot be captured entirely by interviews and official documents.

Data collection also included relevant legislation, organizational texts such as service standards and regulations, international policy reports and mass media publications. Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to the research participants. The managers were given a brief description of the research goals at the beginning of the interview and could refrain from answering questions. Semi-structured interviews lasting for about an hour were conducted in Russian, digitally recorded and often followed up with telephone calls (see Appendix 1: topic guide for interviews).

All this data was integrated and analysed in order to explore, in an inductive and contextual manner, the values and norms of managerial culture, and the processes of service integration versus interpretation by the managers and front-line employees. Questions used in the semi-structured interviews included perceptions of public service quality, challenges faced during policy implementation and organizational learning. Questions were asked in the same way but in an open-ended manner without offering specific options for responses, so as to let respondents speak their views in their own words. While the interview was structured around these standard questions, open discussions also developed around particular questions. Statements that were thought to indicate the respondents' views were extracted from the interview texts and thematised on a cross-case basis.¹⁴

In the following stage of analysis, the commonalities of each subject's narrative were interpreted further and compared with patterns identified during observations and in the organizational texts studied. Finally, in the contextualisation stage, the patterns that were noted were applied back to the subjects' narratives to reveal how the meaning of customer service management and learning changes from participant to participant. The process of inductive thematisation showed that similar patterns were evident in both case organizations as well as the OSS across regions.

4. INTRODUCING SINGLE-WINDOW APPROACH IN TRANSITIONAL CONTEXT

4.1 Organization of the Work Processes

The OSS were introduced with the aims "to reduce risks of corruption and improve quality of public services" and expected to compete with traditional public services in terms of better quality, easy access and more comfortable environment.¹⁵ *"These have proved to be highly popular with citizens more used to being shunted from one public body to another by poorly motivated civil servants lacking in customer orientation"* (Knox, 2008: 489). The organization of the work is presented in Figure 1.

¹⁴ Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990.

¹⁵ Message of the President of RK to the People of Kazakhstan, February 2005, "Kazakhstan on the Way to Accelerated Economic, Social and Political Modernization."

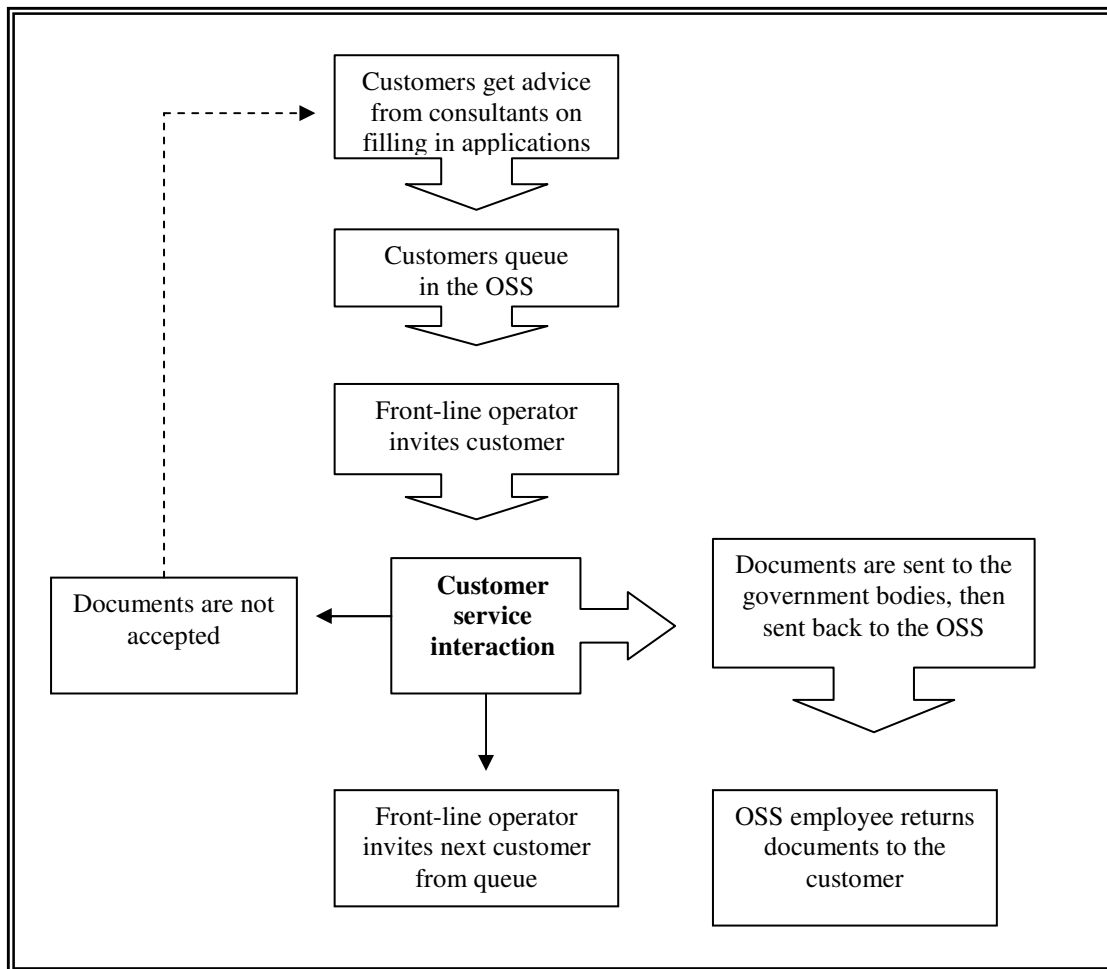


Figure 1: The Organization of the Work Processes in the OSS

As Figure 1 illustrates, the front-line operators do not make decisions on applications, the emphasis is only on quick and correct acceptance and delivery of documents. Hence, the activity of the OSS is limited to technical operation providing service as a *mediator* between the government and customers rather than being a *service provider* in itself. In practice the OSS collect paperwork and send to the government offices to pass through the same administrative process as before introduction of the OSS. At the root of policy launch, the concept of OSS was limited to the use of single-window arrangement as a physical access point to services and information whereas international practice suggests that the OSS can be used as a single point of customer contact at which decisions are made.¹⁶

¹⁶ See, for example, Hagen and Kubicek, 2000; Institute of Public Administration Australia, 2002.

Within single-window framework “*all of a customer’s business can be completed in a single contact, be it face to face or via phone, fax, Internet or other means.*”¹⁷ However, as Figure 2 illustrates, the OSS provide an *alternative* rather than *single* access to the public services along with traditional departments which put significant constraints for service integration process.

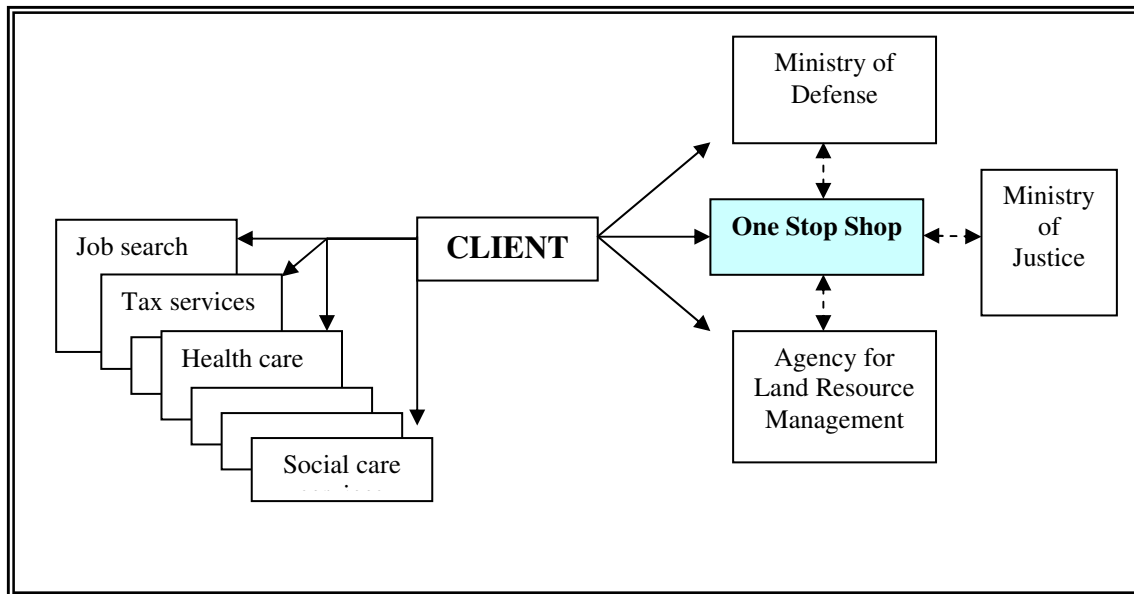


Figure 2: Kazakhstani Model of Public Service Access at the One Stop Shop

It is evident from Figure 2 that services of the coordinating authority, MJ, are delivered through single-window arrangements “reducing personal points of contact lessens opportunities for corrupt practices” (Knox, 2008: 489), whereas the traditional departments continue to have direct customer service and through the OSS as an alternative channel. The research findings show that service integration has faced strong resistance from the political managers of the traditional departments who are concerned with losing power, authority, resources and sources of illegal payments. The mid-level administrative managers and low-rank civil servants are also reluctant to implement changes in traditional ways of working and renegotiate their professional roles from the service providers into the back-office staff.¹⁸

¹⁷ Hagen and Kubicek, 2000.

¹⁸ The term “back-office” is used to define employees who process documents and do not deal with customers directly as opposed to the “front-office” staff who provide consultation and accept applications directly from clients.

In certain way the OSS are competing with selected traditional public services. They provide the same services, but their purpose is to provide a better quality public service in a more comfortable space and in more accessible ways. As highlighted above, the opening times and physical environment of the OSS are more convenient for clients than suggested by the traditional departments. The OSS have improved public access to the services by introducing multi-channel service delivery: through face-to-face contact, call-centre, post offices, mobile technology and information kiosks. Hence, the OSS seem to offer a sort of choice for citizens to choose services at the OSS or traditional government bodies. However, the research findings suggest that the clients have limited choice of the services delivered within the OSS policy framework. The important observation is that services lack customer-orientation which is at the heart of NPM ideology: decisions on the spectrum of services were made by the central government without consultation with customers. Social care services are missing from the list of services which might be the most appropriate for selection given low social indicators in Kazakhstan (poverty rate is over 20 %, and exceeding 60 % in oil-rich regions).¹⁹ Thus, the new public sector organization has followed the traditional centralized pattern of work.

4.2 The Control of OSS

At the local level the OSS are geographically dispersed customer service offices supposed to have power and autonomy from the central government bodies. In practice the OSS represent operative units of the MJ (providing 16 legal services out of 25) where the coordinating authority is responsible for maintaining all necessary conditions for the proper functioning of the OSS (such as allocation of budgets, support with buildings, staff, technologies).

Despite the declared autonomy of the OSS on issues such as financial and organizational management, the research findings show that the senior managers of the MJ have powers to formulate all decisions of the OSS managers: concerning annual budget planning, methods of delivering services, cooperation with local municipalities and stakeholders, providing performance statistics.

¹⁹ World Bank Report “Ten Things You Never Knew about the World Bank in Kazakhstan”, 2008, <http://digitalmedia.worldbank.org/tenthings/eca/kazakhstan/intro-kazak.html>

To strengthen control over performance within the OSS, the so-called “Situational Centre” (in Russian “*Situatsionnyi Centre*”) has been introduced. The Situational Centre represents CCTV-recording system combined with monitoring of the performance statistics in online regime (for example, number of applications processes/documents issued/clients served, speed of service). All data, both video-recordings of customer service interactions and statistical data, are collected, stored and available in the MJ in Astana. The use of the system raises serious ethical concerns given the fact that customers, many of whom are accompanied by their children, are not aware of being recorded.

The OSS, as customer service organizations, are challenged with two logics: a need to be cost-efficient and a desire to be customer-orientated, and these twin objectives are fundamentally contradictory (Korczynski, 2002). On the one hand, the OSS seek to reduce costs per customer transaction by increasing the speed of service, yet, on the other hand, the managers encourage their employees to be quality-orientated. The managers and staff are located in a cycle of accountability which aims to increase reliability, performance accuracy and reduce corruptive practices. The electronic monitoring system creates a myth of “perfect information” and total control. However, the research evidence suggests that the reality is far from the accuracy, reliability and completeness. The statistical figures are unable to explain the reasons behind these issues. The managers in the MJ are distanced from the front-line reality and rely on virtual lenses of statistics. The important part is missing such as tacit skills and interpretative knowledge of the front-line staff, as well as service quality perceived by customers.

In many ways OSS have become victims of the political ambitions. The pressure to match political promises in terms of cost and time saving capacity, fighting red tape and growing workload of services (number of services is to be increased up to 130 services by 2011²⁰), has trapped OSS in a cycle of short-term results thinking. Concepts of clear targets, performance indicators and responsibility through performance mechanisms collide with a culture that is strongly influenced by legal control and traditional administrative procedures. In this respect, the new technologies seem to be an excellent tool for exercising and extending centralization. Thus the link between resources and

²⁰ Ministry of Justice of RK, 17 March 2009, “Report on Main Directions of Performance of the Justice Departments”.

results, which is a central element of NPM reform, has little impact in the OSS. The structure and functioning within the new public sector organizations followed the traditional characteristics of Kazakhstani bureaucracy. The OSS managers are not “free to manage” within their own spheres of responsibilities, and under discretionary control from the management of the MJ who can intervene in all areas of service management.

5. CONTRADICTIONS OF THE PERSONNEL POLICIES

5.1 Selection and Recruitment

Many of the problems constraining implementation of the OSS policy are related to the lack of effective human resource management system.²¹ At the initial stage of OSS establishment civil servants were attracted to the OSS with promises of better salaries and career perspectives in a new, innovative organization supported at the highest political level. However, political promises were not fulfilled: the OSS staff were provided low-paid employment contracts and limited career perspectives.²² Intensive customer service work demanded from the front-line employees to perform high level of “*emotional labour*”²³ by suppressing their feelings of tiredness or irritation.

The recruitment of the OSS managers is characterized by patronage system. Vacancies on managerial positions are not advertised, and information on vacancies is circulated through “word of mouth”. Most managers have worked in the regional departments of justice prior to their appointment in the OSS and have connections with the political managers of the MJ based on friendship, nepotism and mutual obligation. Such reliance on informal power has personalized the regime and placed patronage at the centre of recruitment within the OSS context.

²¹ Janenova, October 2008, pp. 134-135.

²² Monthly payment of a front-line employee is around 150 Euro with living costs similar to the level of Eastern European countries.

²³ Emotional labour was popularized by the work of Hochschild (1983) into the way airline cabin crew are taught and told to manage their emotions in order to present a pleasant face.

By contrast, the recruitment of the front-line workers is conducted on the basis of merit-bases system in order to find “right fit” of employees for such a “high stress” environment. Vacancies for the front-line jobs are advertised in local mass media, and through job fairs for unemployed people and university graduates. A typical front-line employee is in her or his early 20s and likely to be a graduate, often with a postgraduate degree. There is a disproportionate number of men who constitute 80 % of OSS managers and females who compose 80 % of the front-line workers. Most graduates see a job in the OSS as a stepping-stone to improved career opportunities in the public sector. The core criteria for selection of staff are behavioural skills, personality characteristics, and specific abilities, for example, team-working and ability to work under moral pressure.

There appears to be a paradox about the OSS experience of selecting and shaping its labour force. The OSS suffers from high levels of labour turnover and high levels of employee dissatisfaction.²⁴ The OSS have adopted a “*sacrificial human resource strategy*”: rather than resolving tension by improving employee morale, organizational commitment or job satisfaction, the managers deliberately sacrifice the wellbeing of staff, accepting “*high levels of stress and emotional burnout of the front line staff, accompanied by high turnover as the price for maintaining high levels of service at low cost*”.²⁵

5.2 Training and Adaptive Learning

Training is another issue which requires special attention. Each new employee passes four-week induction training. During internship the newcomers are socialized to the culture and beliefs of the OSS environment. Most of the time is spent sitting near the senior colleagues and observing the process of service delivery with informal and spontaneous storytelling about work which frames norms, values and coping mechanisms.²⁶ To keep update of legislation staff are required to read legal documents and get information through management briefings and regular on-the-job training.

²⁴ Annual personnel turnover rate in the case organizations is up to 70%.

²⁵ Wallace, Eagleson and Waldersee, 2000, p.182.

²⁶ Janenova, May 2008, Policy Report USAID/Pragma, “Training Needs Analysis of the One Stop Shops in Kazakhstan: Investigating Opportunities for E-learning”.

However, the empirical data suggests that this information is quite limited, and service quality is most effectively exploited in a team-working environment. When facing difficult issues the employees rely on social networks by seeking advice from more experienced colleagues. The coaching method of work is widely used to transfer knowledge from the senior staff to the newcomers. Each action of the front-line employees is prescribed, thus, there is no ambiguity left and little room for imagination, appropriation and development. Learning at the OSS is constructed at the level of the routine: learning new routines, standards, technology changes, unlearning the old ways of working and becoming accomplished in meeting the changing numerical targets.

This paper argues that learning does take place in the OSS, but too often in an underdeveloped form. Reporting on every action of the organization can be viewed as a demonstration of organizational reflexivity, but the pressure for short-term targets makes the manner in which they are used defensive rather than reflective. In this environment, learning comes to fight with short-term problems, intensify performance and push capability to the limit. This is adaptive, structure-based learning within customer service context where the front-line employees are not encouraged to challenge the ways in which the service processes are implemented.

6. EVALUATION OF THE OSS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This paper has shown that there has been certain positive progress in improving access to information and public services as a result of the OSS policy implementation. Services of the OSS are now delivered through multiple channels: both through face-to-face and virtual communication; service standards and regulations have been developed making information transparent for citizens (speed of service, fees, requirements); grievance procedure has been introduced to accept and review public complaints; performance evaluation system based on monitoring of quantitative data has been created.

However, despite these achievements this paper argues that the OSS initiative has not been able to challenge the prevailing traditional structure that exists in Kazakhstani administration. The new public sector organization has not shifted the locus of budgetary authority and managerial responsibility from the centre to a point close to the service delivery as happened in other successful countries. The OSS are hierarchically dependent

on the traditional government bodies such as the MJ, and are funded by the Ministry through the normal budgetary process without having administrative or financial autonomy. This is far from the normal NPM trend, in which a key point about the autonomy granted is that it seeks to decentralize budgets and to take authority away from the centre.

In certain way the OSS seem to be competing with traditional public services in terms of more convenient opening times, more comfortable space and more accessible ways. However, the research findings suggest that Kazakhstani customers have a limited choice of services delivered at the single-window centers. Although the OSS policy was initiated at the highest political level, its implementation has faced strong resistance from the traditional government bodies and lack of political commitment.

The research evidence has shown that the accountability process has followed the traditional pattern. Performance appraisal of the activity of the OSS is made through statistical reports on the number of services provided without evaluation of clients' satisfaction. Reports on cost-benefit analyses of the huge investments and operational costs have not been made available to the public. Where many countries have re-engineered both the front-office and back-office service processes, the OSS has really concentrated its attention on the front-line service provision by investing in modern offices, new equipment, technological innovations without in-depth change processes in the back-offices of the traditional departments.

In NPM theory evaluation of customer satisfaction is one of the techniques to yield important data and improve quality. Explicit standards and performance measures are other elements of NPM. However, with OSS, even though service standards and regulations are introduced, performance evaluation is vague. Enhancement of services follows the top-down traditional process where the central government determines what type of services to deliver without consultation with clients.

In summary, the OSS initiative has established a structure which declares to focus on business style of management, public service orientation and use of innovations. This paper argues that most of elements of the OSS relate to the characteristics of traditional administration:

- they have not been able to decentralize power to the people involved in service delivery;
- they have not integrated public services at the single access point;
- they have not improved evaluation of service quality based on customers' views;
- they have trained employees, but limiting their discretion and behaviour to the strict rules and guidelines and discouraging to challenge old ways of working;
- they have not been able to reduce bureaucracy and corruption.

The OSS meet the interests of the bureaucrats more than they meet the needs and expectations of customers. The solutions implemented are the result of central decisions. The OSS in Kazakhstan are not a break from the traditional model as the NPM model would suggest.

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper has been to analyze the ways in which traditional bureaucracy of Kazakhstan has adopted and adapted NPM ideas in the transitional context using the case of OSS. The research evidence has shown that the extent to which NPM ideas were imported was limited and constrained by the institutional framework and culture prevailing in the traditional bureaucracy. The OSS reproduced the hierarchical and centralized nature of service delivery and followed the traditional pattern of control.

Introduction of performance evaluation, emphasis on results, adoption of market forms collide with the traditional culture, the normative framework and practices established in Kazakhstani administration. It seems that in Kazakhstan the original idea has been “*to provide better spending for more*” and to adopt new technologies to make services customer-oriented, integrated and better quality. The reason for the persistence of traditional characteristics is that the initiative was designed and implemented by the government officials whose ability to innovate and break with old practices, their mind-

set, limited their understanding and willingness of the change. The OSS have not managed to change traditional bureaucratic practices in serving citizens: they failed to provide single access to customer-oriented, joined-up public services. In fact, the existing structure and culture are important constraints on NPM development in Kazakhstan.

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APPENDIX 1.

TOPIC GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH ONE STOP SHOP MANAGERS

Objectives

- To gather reflections on the experiences of service integration
- To identify perceptions of challenges and constraints faced by managers
- To understand needs of managers to improve work processes

Introduction

- Introduce purpose of research; timing; consent

1. Present circumstances

- Age/gender
- Summary of current activity (work, education)

2. Concepts

What do they understand by “one stop shop”, “public service quality”?

3. What do they see as the drivers for public service reform in Kazakhstan?

4. What challenges do they experience during work? (prompts: structural, political, cultural, technological)

5. In looking particularly at pilot projects of One Stop Shops:

- a) what did they have in place at the beginning of the project?
- b) what did they do? what happened (details of the process)? how staff learnt new skills and knowledge to deliver different public services?
- c) were there any unintended outcomes?
- d) if they had to do the pilot again, what would they change?

6. What has changed in terms of service quality, managerial processes, interactions between managers and staff, managers and customers, managers and colleagues from government bodies?

Ending: give contact details