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# **The Dynamics of Open Government Policy in Russia**

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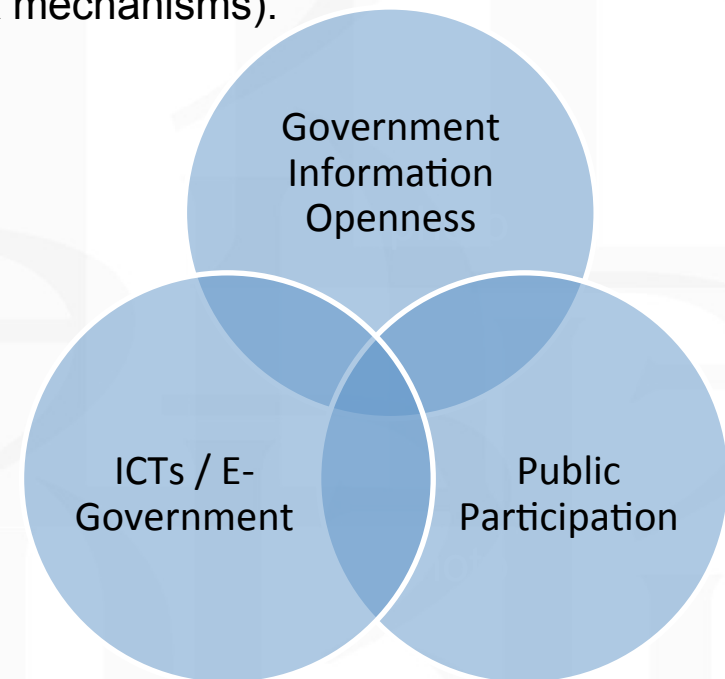
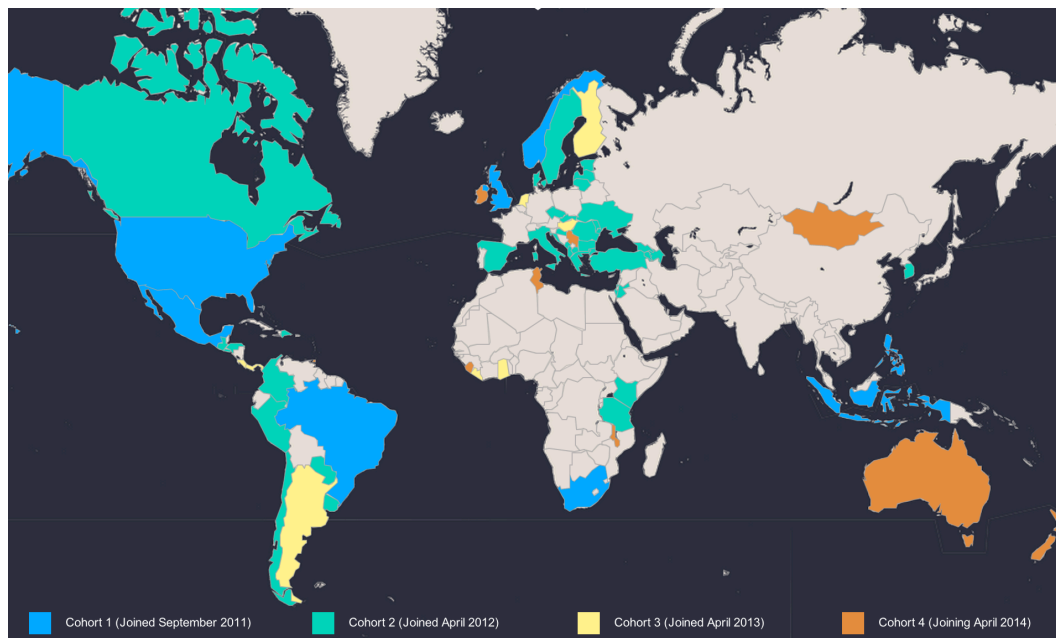
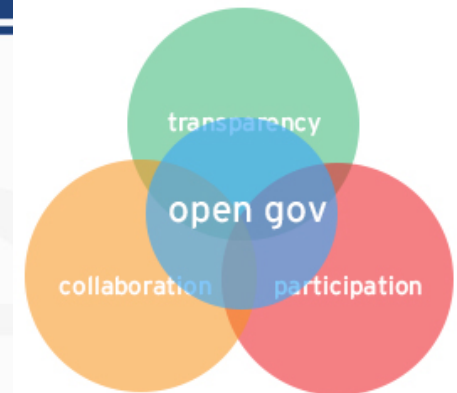


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## Contemporary definitions:

- Open Government as a combination of the *philosophy* of openness (government transparency and information openness) and the *technology* of openness (ICTs, e-government);
- Open Government as a combination of *vision* (information) and *voice* (public participation) [Meijer et. al 2012].
- *Basic elements*: information on the web-sites, open government data, e-participation (electronic petitions, forums, online feedback mechanisms).



## Research Questions:

- 1) Why a non-democratic country like Russia need open government, which is associated with democracy?
- 2) Why the implemented open government policy has not challenged the existing regime?

## Theoretical Framework:

- 1) *Multiple Streams Framework* [Kingdon 2003]: problems, policies, politics => window of opportunities;
- 2) *Policy Transfer Concept* [Dolowitz, Marsh 2000]: emphasis on actors (donors and recipients) and their motivation; transfer failures (uninformed, incomplete, inappropriate transfer);
- 3) *Policy Translation Concept* [Stone 2012]: policy transfer as interpretation and reconstruction of policy meanings;



ОТКРЫТОЕ  
ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВО

- **Politics stream:** presidential and parliamentary elections period, Medvedev's modernization discourse and high expectations for changes, favorable international milieu (Partnership for Modernization with the EU, visits to the USA);
- **Problems:** Medvedev's legitimacy problem as President and future Prime-Minister, legitimacy of Putin – Medvedev swap, failure of the administrative reform, international socialization;
- **Policies:** 1) International initiatives on Open Government (USA, UK, Open Government Partnership); 2) Domestic policies (information openness, public councils at government agencies).
- **Policy Window:**
  - 1) 2011, Medvedev's initiative on Big Government => Medvedev's Campaign Staff (M. Abyzov), Open Government => Working Group on Open Government (S. Ivanov – M. Abyzov);
  - 2) 2012, Putin's article "Democracy and the Quality of Government" => Russian Public Initiative (e-petitions' portal).



- **2010 – 2011:** Arab Spring (Twitter – Revolutions);
- **2012 – 2012:** Protests against the results of the elections in Russia;
- ⇒ Internet is perceived as a threat, new repressive legislature since 2012;
- ⇒ **Open Government as a carrot in the Russian Internet – policy, a part of “virtual politics”.**



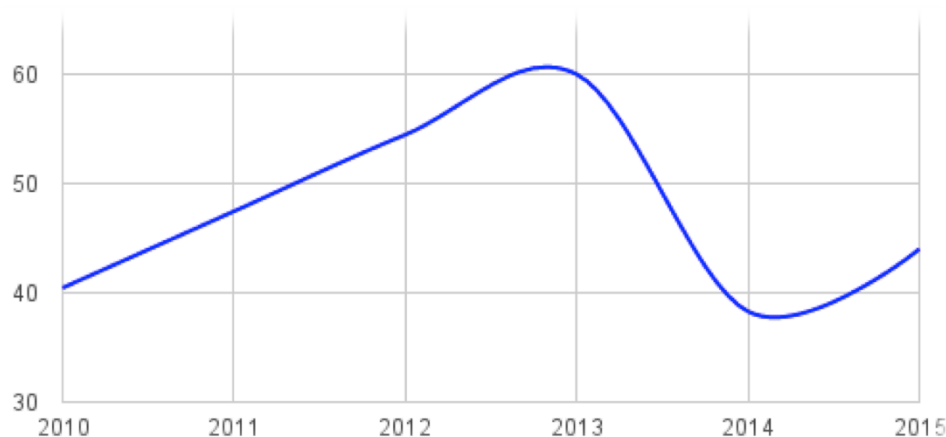
### Russian Open Government Policy Elements:

- **“old instruments”**: the new birth to existing structures and mechanisms (public councils, anti-corruption expertise etc.);
  - **“new instruments”**: open government data, e-participation (Russian Public Initiative Portal);
- ⇒ Open Government as a mixture of borrowings (open data, e-petitions) and home-made policies;
- ⇒ Diffusion and hierarchy in open government.

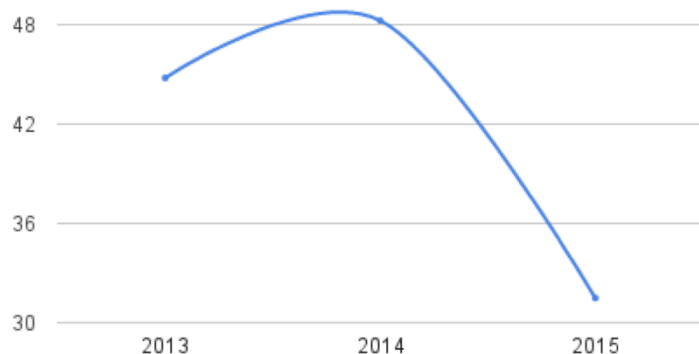




## Lost in Translation? Policy Results - *Vision*

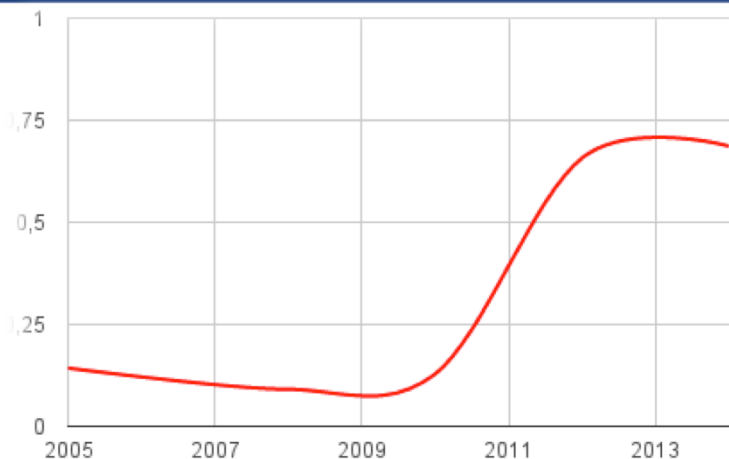


[1] Federal Agencies' Web-Sites Information Openness, %  
Source: Research Project "Infometer" <http://infometer.org>

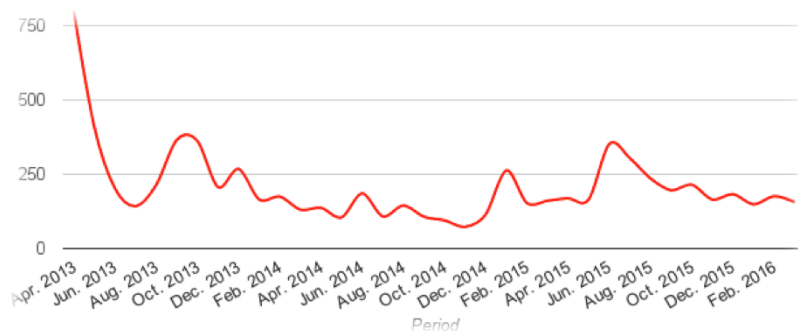


[2] Russia's Indicators in Open Data Barometer, 2013-2015.  
Source: WWW Foundation, <http://opendatabarometer.org>

- 1) Decline in policy effectiveness since 2013;
- 2) Low impact of open data and information openness on social, economic and political spheres;
- 3) Open Data release as a mechanistic process of meeting the legal requirements.



[1] Russia in the UN E-Participation Index; Source: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/About/Overview/E-Participation>



[2] Number of e-petitions, submitted to the Russian Public Initiative Portal, Source: <http://analytics.prior.nw.ru>

- 1) Formal creation of e-participation mechanisms => raise in the international rankings (socialization and international legitimacy);
- 2) Institutional design of e-participation hinders collective action and impose costs on participation (pre- and post-moderation, expert committee, lack of deliberation);
- 3) Little impact on real decision – making (no petitions have been discussed at State Duma);
- 4) The interest of the government and society towards e-participation is declining.



### Open Government as a failed policy transfer:



- 1) **Uninformed Transfer:** the reduction of international contacts on the issue of open government (sovereignty concerns overweight policy learning);
- 2) **Incomplete Transfer:** middle-of-the-road decisions, mixture of policies in one, weak policy implementation and control mechanism, technological problems;
- 3) **Inappropriate Transfer:** democratic innovation is in conflict with a non-democratic political environment.

### Open Government as a policy translation:

- 1) The initial concept was **interpreted** and **adapted** to meet different goals (“carrot” in the Internet policy, legitimation);
- 2) The goals were achieved despite the malfunction of policy, which is usually deliberate;
- 3) Institutional design of policy hinders any challenges to the existing political regime;
- 4) Open Government can contribute to the regime stability as a form of “democratic authoritarianism”.



## Possible Functions of Open Government in Russia

[Brancati 2014; Gerschewski 2013; He 2011 ]

- 1) **Legitimation of government decisions** as being a result of a broad discussion or petition;
- 2) **External legitimation of regime** and international socialization;
- 3) **Information acquisition**: understanding issues' salience and public mood (Russian Public Initiative, Narodny Kontrol' (People's Control) services);
- 4) **Cooptation**, patronage distribution (Membership of Expert Councils, public hearings etc.)
- 5) **Rent-seeking**: allocation of budget funds and control functions among the administrative and business elite (M.Abyzov, Rostelecom etc.);
- 6) **Monitoring**: "opening" agencies and regions for controlling them, open government requirements as an indicator of efficiency;
- 7) **Authoritarian Deliberation**: getting policy ideas (mostly on the local level)



# Thank you for your attention!

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