

Countering Corruption in Modern Russia

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Abstract

The problem of combating corruption is of particular relevance in Russia. In the 2023 global anti-corruption ranking, Russia took a lowly 137th place between Paraguay and Kyrgyzstan. The authors sought not only to reveal the reasons for its unprecedented growth in the last two decades, but also to show how anti-corruption policy is set up in the country and what the real results of the anti-corruption fight are. Using factual material, the authors show the true reasons for the unprecedented growth in the scale of corruption, point out significant shortcomings in anti-corruption policy and Russian legislation, and identify ways to improve them for the purpose of further socio-economic development. The results of the study not only give an idea of how the situation has developed in the Russian Federation with the growth of corrupt practices, but can also provide real assistance in modernizing anti-corruption policy and changing the current federal legislation in order to strengthen the fight against the theft of money from the state budget. The value of this research is that it contributes to the development of theory and methods of combating corruption in government structures.

Keywords: *Corruption, Causes of Growth, Features of Counteraction in Russia.*

Introduction

Introduction, Materials and Methods

Corruption is a rather complex and ambiguously understood concept, which is historical in nature, develops over time and significantly depends on the social conditions, mentality and traditions of the country. Corruption (from the Latin *corrumpere* - “to corrupt”) is a term denoting the use by an official of his official powers for personal gain, contrary to the law and moral principles in society. Corruption can manifest itself in crimes, offenses, various ethical deviations in behavior, and violations of moral and ethical standards. They are often associated with favoritism and clientelism, especially in the area of personnel decisions and subsequent assistance. Corruption in different countries is often determined by national, ethnic, religious and legal traditions (Corruption: 2001). For example, in some countries, giving a small gift to an official on a birthday or holiday is considered a natural action, while in other countries, the fact of receiving such a gift will be perceived as a gross violation of public morality and even a criminal offense.

The theoretical framework of the study includes an analysis of the scientific literature, providing theoretical contextualization, identifying gaps, contradictions, and identifying important directions for this work.

The understanding of the institutional causes of corruption, its growth and harm to the state and society is based on the ideas of Charles Montesquieu (1955), S. Rose-Ackerman (1999), Dille, B. (2016), V. Pavarala (1996), J. Abed, and H. Davoudi (2000), etc. In their works, not only the typical reasons for the growth of corruption are analyzed and its harm to public administration is shown, but also ways to combat this social

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evil are substantiated. According to their conviction, supported by arguments and facts, a high level of corruption automatically becomes a threat to democracy and the effectiveness of public administration. The source of corruption at all times was considered the deep selfish motivation of the behavior of people in power, the desire for profit using the official position. “It is already known from the experience of centuries,” wrote Charles Montesquieu, “that every person who has power is inclined to abuse it, and he goes in this direction until he reaches his limit” (Montesquieu S.L., 1955). Olson, M., analyzing the causes of corruption, wrote that by countering corruption, the state and society neutralize its impact on the slowdown in economic growth, and its spread is restrained by the fact that the risks outweigh the benefits, but under a combination of circumstances, corruption may at some point expose temptation for any of us (Olson, M., 1995). As historical experience shows, no political system, even the most liberal, is immune from the virus of corruption. Researcher V. Pavarala, having analyzed the state of corruption in India, noted that in developing countries, as a legacy from previous political regimes, many elites are infected with corruption; use corruption schemes to obtain personal gain, and therefore will not voluntarily give it up (Pavagala V., 1996). Developing this idea, the American scientist Benjamin Dille noted that corruption can cause discontent among the people and lead to anti-government protests in the highest echelons of power (Dille, B., 2016). Indeed, in the spring of 2011, the reason for the explosion of citizen discontent, which led to a social revolution in a number of Arab countries, was the blatant corruption of the leadership of these states (Moiseev V. V., Karelina, E. A., Sudorgin, O. A., 2018).

A significant contribution to the study of corruption in modern Russia has been made by domestic scientists (Andrianov, V.D. (2011), Astanin, V.V. (2014), Bilinskaya M.N. (2011), Goncharova I.V. & Chuardin G.S. (2019), Kabanov, P.A. (1998), Moiseev V.V. (2018, 2019, 2023), Kosmin, A.D., Grudtsyna, L.Yu. & Kuznetsov, V.V. (2022), Nitsevich V.F., Stroev V.V. (2019), Prokuratov, V.N. (2012, 2013), etc. Using large factual material, official statistics, they analyzed the reasons for the growth of this social evil in the post-Soviet period, showed a threat to national security. Corruption distorts the administrative function of the state, reduces competitiveness in the economy, reduces the authority of power structures, and negatively affects the international image of Russia.

Having studied scientific works on this topic, the authors note that monographs, articles, dissertations devoted to corruption in modern Russia contain interesting facts about abuse of power and official powers of officials of all ranks, from the municipality to the federal government and the presidential administration of the country. Based on the above arguments and facts, Russian and foreign researchers draw a conclusion about the massive nature of corruption in Russia, its systemic nature.

According to philosophical scientists, the beginnings of corruption relations are not rooted in the political system, but are formed within society, more precisely at the level of the genesis of the individual (Kosmin, A.D., Grudtsyna, L.Yu., Kuznetsov, V.V., 2022). From this point of view, it is possible to identify the main sources of corruption aspirations of people in society.

Firstly, this is neglect (ignoring) of basic moral principles, when profit is at the forefront of all the aspirations of the individual.

Secondly, the personal example of state representatives ceases to convince ordinary citizens of a responsible and selfless attitude towards their duties, and ordinary people are increasingly convinced of their corruption. Thirdly, the calls of state leaders remain unheeded by the country's citizens, and joint actions of government bodies and the population become impossible, which, according to political scientists, leads to the collapse of the state.

Political science approaches the definition of corruption, first, as a factor that deforms the political organization of society, undermining democratic procedures, the authority of political institutions, and the country's leadership. Within the framework of political science approaches, the phenomenon of “political” and “administrative” corruption associated with the struggle of elites, transformation of political status, corrosion of the administrative apparatus, and the use of corruption in political struggle is most often considered (Kabanov, P.A. (1998). Political corruption exists insofar as the official or a current politician in the highest echelons of power and government structures can dispose of resources that do not belong

to him. Each country demonstrates its own national characteristics of corruption in government bodies and government agencies. In Russia, corruption stems from the characteristics of local power structures and is aggravated by the legacy of an authoritarian past (Prokuratov, V.N., 2013). Corruption in the legal sense is a crime associated with the use of official position or social status of an official for personal or corporate interests (Astaniin, V.V., 2014). Most often, such interest comes down to obtaining illegal income, and offenses or crimes are reduced to one or another option for receiving or giving bribes. The subject of a bribe or commercial bribery, along with money, securities and other property, can be benefits or services of a property nature, provided free of charge, but subject to payment (provision of tourist vouchers, apartment renovation, construction of a summerhouse, etc.). Benefits of a property nature can also be an understatement of the value of transferred property, privatized objects, a reduction in rental payments, interest rates for using bank loans, etc.

Corruption in the social sciences is often considered as the use of informal connections and relationships in solving political, state and municipal tasks in personal or corporate interests (Andrianov, V.D., 2011). As a social phenomenon, corruption has been inherent in public-service relations throughout the history of Russia (Moiseev V.V., 2023). Corruption reached its greatest flourishing and enormous scale after the collapse of the USSR, in modern Russia. According to the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation Yuri Chaika, corruption has affected all levels of government and has become systemic. Corruption schemes for stealing federal, regional and municipal budgets are widely used in all areas of government activity, especially in those where financial or material resources are distributed. (Bilinskaya, M.N., Moiseev, V.V., Nitsevich, V.F., 2011). Massive corruption has been officially recognized as one of the threats to national security (Presidential Decree, 2021).

However, many authors, fearing reprisals, when assessing the measures taken in the country to counteract corrupt practices, they do not subject the anti-corruption policies implemented in modern Russia to constructive criticism, and often do not provide scientifically based recommendations for a systematic and uncompromising fight against corruption. Therefore, the authors of the article, having objectively criticized the situation with countering corrupt practices, offer scientifically based recommendations for reducing its level in modern Russia.

The article analyzes the reasons for the unprecedented growth of corruption, notes the main shortcomings in organizing the fight against corruption schemes, and suggests ways to reduce it, taking into account international experience.

The purpose of this study is to study the reasons for the growth of corruption in Russia in order to identify the degree of corruption of public authorities and management and, on this basis, outline the main directions for effective counteraction and recommendations for reducing the scale of corruption in the Russian Federation. This study bridges the gap in previous research by revealing Russian characteristics.

Methods: In the article, the authors used a variety of research methods. Based on the statistical method, the authors show the increase in the level and scale of corruption in modern Russia. Using a comparative method, the authors attempted to show the differences between the fight against corruption in the Russian Federation and world experience. Based on the use of the institutional method, we have attempted to show the role of the president and other government institutions in organizing the fight against corruption.

Rising corruption in Modern Russia

Modern Russia and its economy in recent years have not been going through the best times in post-Soviet history. Unforeseen factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and most importantly, Western sanctions imposed in response to military actions on the territory of Ukraine, have become a serious test of the stability of the Russian financial system, many enterprises and even entire industries.

Under these conditions, as statistics show, the level of corruption in a warring country not only does not decrease, but also, on the contrary, grows even more, taking on monstrous proportions. The greed of officials, law enforcement officers and individual deputies is growing. In Russia, a high position has become

a means of personal enrichment. After the appointment of Andrei Belousov to the post of Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation instead of Sergei Shoigu in May 2024, numerous arrests of high-ranking generals took place in the military department. Thus, on May 14, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation announced the arrest of the head of the personnel department of the Ministry of Defense, Lieutenant General Yuri Kuznetsov, who is accused of receiving a large bribe from an entrepreneur for assistance in concluding government contracts. According to the investigation, the businessman thanked the curator from the military department by buying and deeding land in Krasnodar to the wife of General Kuznetsov for 7.5 million rubles and building a residential building there worth almost 23 million rubles. During searches in a country house, a Moscow apartment and the general's office, more than 100 million rubles in Russian and foreign currency, gold coins, collectible watches and luxury items were seized. On May 23, Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, Lieutenant General Vadim Shamarin, was sent into custody, accused of receiving a bribe in the amount of 36 million rubles. On the same day, Vladimir Verteletsky, head of the Department of the Russian Ministry of Defense for Providing State Defense Orders, was charged with abuse of power. As a result of corruption schemes, the accused military officer caused damage to the state in the amount of more than 70 million rubles. Even earlier, at the end of April 2024, the Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, Army General Timur Ivanov, was arrested for receiving a large bribe (Four Defense Ministry, 2024).

It is noteworthy: law enforcement officials, (including the prosecutor's office, the FSB, the police, etc.) instead of fighting corruption through legal means, themselves use corruption schemes to enrich themselves. Thus, police colonel Dmitry Zakharchenko, holding a position in the fight against corruption in the structure of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, actively enriched himself using his official position. During his arrest, a large sum of money was found on him - more than 8.5 billion rubles (their total weight was almost 1.5 tons). In June 2019, the Presnensky Court of Moscow sentenced former police colonel D. Zakharchenko to 13 years in a maximum-security colony, also fined him 117 million 990 thousand rubles and deprived him of his special rank. Another fact: in April 2019, three employees of the Federal Security Service (FSB, former KGB), Kirill Cherkalin, Andrey Vasiliev and Dmitry Frolov, were arrested for corruption. These heirs of F. Dzerzhinsky robbed the state of 12 billion rubles (Moiseev V.V., 2019).

It should be emphasized here that dishonest officials, appointed to positions by special decrees of the head of state, annually rob Russia not of billions or hundreds of billions, but of trillions of rubles. According to the data of the ex-chairman of the Accounts Chamber Sergei Stepashin, which he personally reported to President V. Putin, high-ranking corrupt officials stole an astronomical amount from the state budget - 1,000,000,000,000 rubles (Moiseev V.V., 2023). After the president did not take the necessary measures, the direct damage from corruption increased. As the new Chairman of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation A. Kudrin reported, the control agency revealed violations amounting to 1 trillion 865 billion rubles. "This is almost twice as much as in 2016, 3.5 times more than in 2015. But I'll say right away that 760 billion rubles of this amount are accounting violations at Roscosmos; based on the results of these checks, criminal cases have been opened (Kudrin A., 2018).

These and other facts show that Russian corrupt officials are not afraid of either long imprisonment or public condemnation. Greed and a passion for enrichment in any way are the main motives for the corrupt actions of modern Russian officials, both civilian and military.

Reasons For the Growth of Corruption in Capitalist Russia

The unprecedented growth of corruption in capitalist Russia became possible due to many reasons, the main one of which, in our opinion, is that the Russian leadership did not have a systematic approach to combating corruption. Due to the lack of a system in anti-corruption policy and consistency in its practical implementation, corruption has now reached unprecedented proportions, penetrating not only regional and municipal authorities, courts, prosecutors, customs, police, but also the upper echelons of power: the Presidential Administration, Government, State Duma and Federation Council. Therefore, before talking about political mechanisms to combat corruption in modern Russia, it is important to understand that the fight against it is not limited to the fight against its individual manifestations. Today, the fight is being

waged, in our opinion, not against a social phenomenon, not against the causes that give rise to corruption on a mass scale, but against individual corrupt officials. A systemic, complex struggle is always closely connected with the regulation of all aspects of the life of society and the state. We must start with creating favorable political conditions for combating corruption, which implies not only the presence of opposition, but also real freedom of speech, the possibility of open discussions on current political topics, as well as political competitiveness and transparency of power. Without these conditions, the struggle “for power without corruption” will not be successful (Moiseev, V.V., 2019).

Other, no less significant conditions are the political will of the president of the country, his desire and daily purposeful work to eradicate the conditions for the growth of corrupt practices. According to the Constitution, the head of state determines all domestic and foreign policy. Power allows the president to achieve clarity and rigor of legislation and the inevitability of criminal penalties for corrupt officials; arrange a reduction in areas where decision-making depends on the will of individual officials; create conditions for the formation of civil society, raising the educational level of the population, including in terms of legal literacy. And it is necessary not only to identify problems, but also to achieve their solution using political mechanisms, to achieve, if not eradication (which is practically impossible), then at least a significant reduction in corrupt practices.

To combat corruption in Russia, the Strategy and National Anti-Corruption Plan were adopted, which reflected many of the conceptual foundations of anti-corruption policy, recommendations of Russian scientists and international experience. However, practice shows that the Strategy and numerous plans adopted in its implementation along with anti-corruption legislation do not achieve the desired result: sociological surveys and scientific research findings indicate the ineffectiveness of anti-corruption measures in the Russian Federation. This circumstance requires the formation of new conceptual and methodological approaches to the implementation of anti-corruption policy.

Until now, strict rules for holding tenders and competitions for public procurement, etc. have not been established in Russia. Public procurement, as a rule, involves choosing the objectively best proposal from several based on a competition, but sometimes an official can ensure victory for the corrupt official who promised the largest “commission”. For this purpose, its rules are not fully announced and the circle of participants in the competition consists of affiliated companies or is narrowed down to the selected winner, etc. As a result, corrupt officials win, and purchases are made at an inflated price, which allows him and the official who conducted the tender to live comfortably.

The lack of transparent and strict rules for conducting a public procurement campaign allowed not only individual officials, but also entire ministries and departments to steal the expenditure side of the country's state budget (Nitsevich, N.F. et al., 2019).

In countering corrupt practices in modern Russia, little use is made of international experience in the fight against corruption. Despite the fact that the Russian Federation signed the UN Convention against Corruption in 2003, which contains the best directions and methods of such a fight, they are practically not used in its jurisdiction. The reason is simple: by ratifying the UN Convention, signed by President V. Putin, deputies of the State Duma in March 2006 adopted Federal Law No. 40, which abandoned the most important articles aimed at effective struggle (Federal Law, 2006). Thus, Article 20, providing for criminal punishment for the illegal enrichment of corrupt officials, and Article 31 on the seizure of illegally acquired property were removed from the initialed international document. Deputies explained this withdrawal of fundamental anti-corruption innovations, tested by the international community, as a contradiction to national legislation.

Let us allow ourselves to disagree with such arguments. And here's why: the Constitution (Basic Law) of the Russian Federation provides for a procedure for resolving discrepancies between signed generally recognized international treaties and existing national laws. Article 15 of the Constitution prescribes the unconditional application of the provisions of the UN Convention, signed by the head of state, even if there are other rules provided for by the current legislation (The Constitution of the Russian Federation (2023). In this case, there was a legal conflict with which the State Duma deputies covered themselves so

as not to implement In Russian legislation, legal norms that are dangerous for corrupt officials are resolved unambiguously: by applying the norms of a signed international treaty. Moreover, the State Duma, having ignored this constitutional requirement, violated paragraph 1 of Article 15 of the Basic Law, which states that the laws adopted “must not contradict the Constitution. Russian Federation” (The Constitution of the Russian Federation (2023).

By similar unconstitutional actions, Russian legislators in 2006 did not ratify a number of other important articles of the UN Convention against Corruption. For example, a clause on the protection of applicants was not included in national legislation. As a result, a number of Russian citizens who officially reported the corrupt actions of officials, including in the highest echelons of power, found themselves without legal protection and, moreover, were punished criminally (Prokuratov, V.N., 2013). The authors counted more than a dozen similar exceptions from the initialed UN Convention against Corruption - they are still not included in Russian anti-corruption legislation.

Features Of Anti-Corruption in Modern Russia

It should be noted here that anti-corruption legislation has a number of national features that have had and still have a beneficial effect on the growth of corruption. Suffice it to say that with the coming to power of President V. Putin, during the first 8 years of his leadership of the country, not a single anti-corruption regulatory legal act was adopted. The reason is simple: the president vetoed bills aimed at fighting corruption (Bilinskaya, M.N., Moiseev, V.V., Nitsevich, V.F. (2011). And only with the election of D.A. Medvedev as president in post-Soviet Russia, the first federal law appeared and an anti-corruption law was formed legislation. But the federal law of December 25, 2008 No. 273-FZ “On Combating Corruption” was not without significant shortcomings. Thus, the law established the highest punishment for corruption... the removal of an official from his position and required the filing of declarations to identify corrupt transactions. but not about income and expenses, in order to establish that an official or other official is living beyond his means, but only about his income. Moreover, the official himself, his wife and minor children were required to submit income declarations (Federal Law, 2008). .

If you follow the letter of this Russian law, then an infant or a schoolchild must submit a declaration of income under 18 years of age. And only under public pressure was it possible to make some adjustments: from January 1, 2013, Russian officials, their wives and minor children began to report not only their income, but also their expenses. Regulatory authorities have the opportunity to establish discrepancies between expenses and income. But only. Bring to criminal liability under Art. 20 of the UN Convention did not allow the Russian law of March 8, 2006 No. 40-FZ, just as it did not allow the confiscation of property acquired by criminal means in accordance with Art 31 of this international document partially ratified (Federal Law, 2006).

The fight against corruption in modern Russia has another characteristic feature: it does not fully use the accumulated international experience, in particular, of Singapore. Meanwhile, there is a lot to learn from Singapore. In a short historical period, this state, under the leadership of the wise Lee Kuan Yew, not only significantly reduced the level of corruption, but also made Singapore a leader in economic development.

When Lee Kuan Yew came to power, to combat corruption in the highest echelons of power, he created an anti-corruption agency, the director of which reported directly to the head of government. The agency received the right to detain potential bribe-takers, conduct searches in their homes and places of work, check bank accounts, etc. Investigations were even initiated against close relatives of the prime minister. A number of ministers convicted of corruption were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, some committed suicide and others fled the country.

Singapore's anti-corruption legislation was later amended several times. So, in 1989, the norm on confiscation of property was introduced.

The fight against corruption was accompanied by simplification of decision-making procedures and elimination of ambiguity in laws.

Summation

As a result of the issuance of clear and simple rules, including the abolition of permits and licensing, Singaporean corrupt officials therefore lost the opportunity to widely engage in corrupt practices.

Great practical results in reducing the level of corrupt transactions were achieved by increasing the salaries of judges, officials, and police officers. High and sometimes huge salaries almost eliminated the temptation to enrich themselves through the risks of taking bribes. The salaries of officials increased to 20-25 thousand dollars per month, ministers - to 100 thousand dollars, judges - to 1 million US dollars, which immediately increased their integrity and eliminated the so-called conflict of interest. Moreover, lawyers from other best lawyers in the country replaced the entire former corrupt judiciary.

Honesty and integrity of an official in Singapore have become the most important qualities for career growth. Of course, the desire to take bribes for services rendered did not immediately disappear from officials, but they knew that constant control over them had been created in Singapore. It was carried out by the Corruption Investigation Bureau, which was empowered to check not only their bank accounts, but also the income of their wives, children, other relatives and even friends. If a clerk and his family lived beyond their means, the Bureau automatically, without waiting for a command from above, began an investigation. When a minister indicates in his income statement that he only owns a rusty car, this does not surprise anyone except in Russia. After such a report in Singapore, a desk audit of the compliance of income and expenses is initiated, and the official is obliged to report where he got the money to buy expensive real estate or a prestigious car. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the last criminal case brought by Singapore's anti-corruption body dates back to 1986 (Moiseev V., 2011).

In 2024, Singapore is among the TOP-5 leading countries in the world in anti-corruption, ranking 4th. (For comparison: corrupt Russia will be given a lowly 137th place in this ranking.

Successes in combating corruption naturally contributed to the socio-economic development of this small country. In terms of business conditions, Singapore is far superior to modern Russia, which could not but affect the economic indicators of these countries. Today, corrupt Russia lags behind Singapore in terms of GDP per capita by 10 times. According to foreign rating agencies, Singapore entered the TOP-3 in terms of GDP per capita per year in 2023, showing \$131,580. For comparison: Russia has only \$13,010 (Gold Rating, 2024).

A comparative analysis of counteraction in Russia and Singapore clearly demonstrates the importance of a systematic and uncompromising fight against this social evil. The practice of anti-corruption policies of these two states has shown: those who want to reduce the level and scale of illegal actions are looking for a way to do this, and those who do not want are looking for a reason not to organize the fight against corruption in the country, to show political will. V. Putin's successor in the presidency, D. Medvedev, in one of his public speeches, trying to explain the poor results in combating corrupt practices, said that corruption is not considered shameful, that it is a mental problem, and therefore it is difficult to fight it in Russia (D. Medvedev, 2010).

A study conducted on the topic "Combating corruption in modern Russia" yielded some interesting results.

Firstly, the facts cited in the article about the suppression of corrupt activities of representatives of government bodies and administration, including ministers, governors, generals and colonels from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the FSB, the Ministry of Defense, and senior officials of other ministries and departments, evoke an ambivalent feeling among Russians. On the one hand, it is good that their corruption crimes were stopped, but on the other hand, society was not informed about the reasons that prompted officials to break the law. The fact that such arrests are just demonstrative actions, settling scores or conflicts between competing clans say 47% of respondents to the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (Corruption in Russia, 2018).

In addition, no measures were taken against those who nominated and appointed these people to high positions, who are still pursuing such an ineffective personnel policy. And in this, too, the authors see the specifics of the fight against corruption in Russia.

Secondly, civil society is practically not involved in the fight against corruption in Russia. This specificity of the fight against corruption in Russia can be seen in the elimination (or self-elimination) of civil society institutions at both the regional and federal levels; this only increases the degree of corruption in the state.

This alarming feature of the fight against corruption for society can be reversed by changing imperfect legislation, increasing the activity of the media, and taking other effective measures to activate civil society. After all, the fight against corruption affects the interests not only of the state, but also of every citizen and society as a whole. Unlike European countries, there are practically no mechanisms for public control over the activities of government bodies in Russia. The transfer of some of the functions of state bodies to self-regulatory organizations, as well as other non-governmental organizations, is only declared.

Thirdly, the Russian specifics of combating corruption include the inertia of the Russians themselves, the lack of their political activity to change radically the attitude towards those who take and those who give these bribes to officials. If you believe surveys of official sociological services and public opinion research institutes, the population of modern Russia is gradually getting used to corruption, accepting it as the norm of behavior in a capitalist society. Thus, according to the Public Opinion Foundation (March 2018), 54% of Russians tolerate having to pay bribes to officials. Public opinion polls show that almost two-thirds of Russians have paid a bribe to an official; 61% are sure that they have no opportunity at all to somehow influence the government and its decisions. Therefore, 75% of respondents assessed the high level of corruption in the country, 38% of survey participants said that the level of corruption in the Russian Federation is increasing, 42% of Russians believe the level of corruption in the Russian Federation is higher than in most European countries (The majority of Russians, 2018).

Based on the results of other sociological surveys, one can highlight the fact that only every sixth Russian expressed personal readiness to fight corruption. It is also alarming that almost the same number of citizens declared their reluctance to participate in anti-corruption campaigns. A significant part of young people is directly career-oriented with the goal of occupying a high position in the government system in order to provide themselves with the starting conditions for enrichment and a comfortable existence. At the same time, the mass consciousness began to justify any means to achieve a goal, including illegal and immoral ones, including bribes to the “right people.”

Neither the state nor society has so far formulated any other guidelines for the youth of our country, thereby actually facilitating the entry into active life of a generation among whom cynical views of the interests of Russia and disdain for their people have become most widespread.

Western media and the World Wide Web - the Internet - have recently succeeded in forming cynical views and unpatriotic feelings in fragile minds.

The results of a survey conducted in Russia by the international organization Transparency International in 2023 clearly showed that in Russia there are fewer and fewer citizens who are ready to openly discuss facts of corruption in the highest echelons of government, and even more so to boldly contact them with law enforcement agencies, because they cannot feel protected (Moiseev, V.V., 2023). And the authors also attribute this factor to the specifics of combating corruption in modern Russia.

Fourthly, the peculiarities of the fight against corruption in Russia include a special procedure for bringing certain categories of officials to criminal liability for corruption. For example, a number of provisions of the Law of the Russian Federation “On the Status of Judges in the Russian Federation” provide judges with unprecedented guarantees of immunity. One of them is the impossibility of bringing to criminal liability and imprisonment without the consent of the qualification board of judges and with the sanction of the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation or the person performing his duties, and etc. This procedure

complicates the work of law enforcement agencies, both in the investigation of criminal cases and prosecution.

Fifthly, the specifics of the fight against corruption in Russia include the relative leniency of criminal penalties for non-compliance with anti-corruption legislation by officials. Thus, in the Federal Law of December 25, 2008 N 273-FZ “On Combating Corruption”, for distortion or failure to provide information about income, property and property-related obligations, a civil servant is subject only to disciplinary action. In the USA and European countries, there is a criminal penalty for this.

Article 7 of the main Russian anti-corruption law of December 25, 2008 contains a rule aimed at developing effective forms of cooperation with law enforcement agencies, special services and financial intelligence units of foreign states for the “search, confiscation and repatriation of property obtained through corruption and located abroad”. However, the confiscation of illegally acquired property itself is not applied in Russia. It does not apply because the corresponding norm of international law has not been ratified by our country. The authors also see in this some specificity of the fight against corruption in Russia.

While declaring in words about an irreconcilable and uncompromising fight against corruption, Russia in practice sometimes carries out the opposite actions. This is evidenced, in particular, by the fact that in February 2023, Russia officially withdrew from the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (Federal Law, 2023).

Thus, despite the anti-corruption work being carried out in modern Russia, a number of features due to the lack of a systematic nature of counteraction and the political will of the leadership, which, in our opinion, do not contribute to reducing its level, currently characterizes the fight against corruption in our country. It is no coincidence that in 2023 Russia took 137th place in the fight against corruption, equaling such underdeveloped states as Sudan, Tajikistan, Papua New Guinea, located between Latin American Paraguay and Central Asian Kyrgyzstan.

Conclusion

The study showed that corruption in modern Russia has struck with its metastases not only middle management personnel, but also the highest echelon of power. This is evidenced by the numerous arrests of senior officials involved in corruption, kickbacks and bribes. Corruption undermines the foundations of democracy, slows down economic growth, destroys public trust in the state, and reduces the legitimacy of government. Russia is currently confidently becoming a world leader in corruption, which permeates all layers of society, all structures and authorities, causing irreparable harm to the country. It reduces the authority of government and government in the eyes of the people, impedes the development of the economy, the administration of justice, the construction of the rule of law, etc. It has become the main obstacle to reforms and transformations.

Considering corruption in the system of social relations of modern Russia from a political science point of view, we can identify a number of political and socio-economic factors that are the main reasons for the growth of corruption. The authors include these factors:

lack of a systematic approach and effective state strategy in the fight against corruption, including political mechanisms to combat corruption;

decline in the spiritual and moral level of the population, moral principles in society;

insufficient political and legal education of citizens, a decline in the authority of law and law, corruption of the law enforcement agencies themselves, which are called upon to wage an uncompromising fight against corruption;

weak personnel policy of the state, which makes it possible for corrupt officials and embezzlers to occupy government positions;

imperfection of anti-corruption legislation, etc.

The impact of corruption is so great that it reduces the efficiency of a market economy, destroys existing democratic institutions, undermines people's trust in government, exacerbates political inequality, gives rise to organized crime, and threatens the country's national security. The scale of corruption in Russia is so great that the authorities are in danger of completely losing control over the functioning of the state. Over the past two decades alone, according to the authors, more than 7 trillion rubles have been stolen through corruption schemes.

Thus, corruption in the Russian Federation, due to a number of reasons (lack of political will, weakness and underdevelopment of political countermeasures, unsystematic and ineffective fight against this social phenomenon, failure to use international experience based on the institutions of civil society, etc.), has become a mass phenomenon. This phenomenon has become a real threat to national security and a factor hindering the socio-economic development of the country.

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