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### Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

#### ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY AS A CONDITION FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC OFFICIALS PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

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#### *Abstract*

Corruption is a multifaceted and multilevel phenomenon. History shows that it is inherent in any society, while its structure, scale, and dynamics are determined by political, social, and economic problems. Corruption is always socially significant, representing activities aimed at the distortion of normal social relations by criminalizing their content through public officials who use their authority for financial gain, contrary to the interests of the service. The professional culture of public administration specialists, which forms under the influence of external factors and includes legal and corporate regulations, moral and ethic values of the social group, is largely determined by the anti-corruption policy pursued by the government. Significant efforts to develop an effective mechanism for combating corruption within public and municipal administration, which also includes preventive measures, are ultimately aimed at forming a work culture for public officials that would reduce unlawful acts of corruption to a minimum. Anti-corruption policy is aimed at improving the major approaches that determine the level of professional culture of public administration employees and local government officials. It involves reinforcing in the legal consciousness of public officials the conceptual principles that meet the requirements of legislation governing relations in the exercise of power by public and local authorities. This direction of anti-corruption activities is important in the current period of formation of the foundations of a democratic state governed by the rule of law, as the professional culture of public officials at any level finds its real expression in their exercise of public administrative functions.

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## 1. Introduction

The professional culture of public officials has come under the scrutiny of different modern scientists. According to Zaslonskaya (2011), professional culture of public officials is "a consistent personal quality that characterizes an official's level of social and professional development, the instruments and methods for the exercise of essential powers in the professional activity, and its results" (p. 144). Some researchers identify the factors that have a direct impact on the state of the professional culture of government employees. They believe that its level depends on corporate ethics, moral standards of behavior, value orientations, personal and professional qualities (Ivanova & Kryukova, 2015; Komleva, 2002; Kotyshev, 2008; Kudaev, 2013; Mikhailova, 2014; Popova, 2015; Shalaginov, 2017)

Pyasetskaya (2014) identifies the following major factors of professional culture in public administration: "professional competence, legal, political, and ethical factors, transparency of professional activities, social responsibility for decisions taken, and discipline" (p. 80).

However, all professional qualities of government employees are determined by the way they perform their official duties in connection with the needs of the society (Pyasetskaya, 2015). In terms of the scope and substance of their activities, power structures often significantly deviate from the legal requirements governing activities in the field of public and municipal administration. This circumstance is closely associated with corruption processes that significantly affect the efficiency and results of the activities of public authorities aimed at achieving goals and completing objectives that correspond to the interests of various social strata and groups and the society as a whole (Slatinov, 2006).

Corruption among public (municipal) officials is largely determined by two major factors: 1) state of the public service; and 2) specific aspects of personnel policy.

The matters of appointment and promotion often classify as state secrets. All too often, the appointees turn out to be incompetent, unprepared, unprofessional, but "inside" people. Older, experienced staff members are replaced by young "reformers" (Magomedov, 2014). Sociological studies show that younger officials are more prone to corruption and aim more towards satisfying their own needs than the needs of the state. The proportion of officials who view their post as a means to satisfy their needs in the higher and lower echelons of power is roughly the same.

In spite of the measures taken in recent years, the legislation on public (municipal) service is not always effective, the mechanisms of putting it into actual personnel practices are not streamlined enough, personnel services are weak and unable to check everything and everyone (Patova, 2016). The level of wages of certain employee categories, particularly at the lower level, also leaves much to be desired, although corruption is extremely latent.

What is required is a very strong political will, wide awareness of corruption in the system of state and municipal service, freedom of journalistic investigations, independent public and social control, and restoration of the former elitism of public service.

## 2. Problem Statement

The anti-corruption policy significantly affects the professional culture of all officials engaged in public and local administration and creates the necessary objective prerequisites for improving the

efficiency of all aspects of public administration. It affects the individual qualities of public servants and reduces subjectivity in public management decision-making. The anti-corruption policy is a prerequisite for the formation of a positive image of public officials and it increases the overall level of the professional culture of the bureaucracy.

### **3. Research Questions**

The study addresses the following problems:

1. The objectivity of influence of the anti-corruption policy on the formation of the professional culture of public and municipal officials.
2. The need for corruption prevention in a modern state as a circumstance that affects the level of the professional culture of public officials.
3. The urgency of developing a system of state anti-corruption standards as a condition for the positive impact on the individual professional culture of public officials.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the impact of measures implemented within the framework of the anti-corruption policy on the professional culture of public officials.

### **5. Research Methods**

This study uses a set of techniques and methods that allow the authors to identify the characteristic features of the impact of the anti-corruption policy on the level of the professional culture of public officials. The following methods are used in connection with the examined problems: analysis of the factors that affect the state of the professional culture and analysis of the regulatory framework that regulates the legal status of public officials, synthesis of the multifaceted relationship between the level of the professional culture of officials with the approaches of the national anti-corruption policy; comparison of the conceptual provisions relating to the anti-corruption activities that affect the professional culture of public officials.

### **6. Findings**

Anti-corruption policy as a condition that determines the professional culture of public and municipal employees is manifested in a set of laws and regulations adopted by the state to reduce the level of negative phenomena in the activities of all structural units of public and municipal administration. It relies on the basic legal elements, which create the necessary conditions for the efficient, purposeful operation of a unified system of public authorities. In practice, anti-corruption measures are directly related to the officials' individual understanding of compliance with professional ethics and acceptability of their behavior in the exercise of authoritative powers when dealing with issues that affect the interests of different social groups and communities. Professional culture suggests that all public officials should be aiming for unconditional compliance with the requirements of legislative acts that regulate

management activities. At the same time, within the framework of the existing laws and regulations, a high level of the professional culture of public officials provides solid grounds for the exercise of a wide range of authoritative powers by the public bodies.

Another important aspect to consider is the relationship between personal and public interests in the actual work of each public official based on the major concepts of the professional culture.

The level of professional culture is largely determined by the existing system of education and training of personnel for public authorities. This means that one of the main points in the implementation of this process is to provide each potential public employee with values that would meet the requirements of a developed democratic state.

Values as an element of professional culture are largely associated with the way a particular state combats various manifestations of corruption, especially those inherent in the exercise of public authority. The officials who are directly engaged in administrative activities should understand that their professional career and growth depend on how well they will resist the adverse effects of corruption, which distort their values of personal professional culture.

To solve this complex and multifaceted problem, a modern state should take a set of legal and organizational measures aimed at reducing corruption pressure on the legal consciousness of public and municipal officials. One of the important areas is corruption prevention, which can be implemented in the following directions:

- 1) formation of intolerance towards corrupt behavior in the society;
- 2) anti-corruption inspection of legal acts and their drafts;
- 3) at least quarterly consideration of the issues of law enforcement by federal public authorities, authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, local authorities, and other bodies and organizations vested with specific state or other public powers by the federal law, according to the results of the effective decisions of courts and arbitration courts about concerning the invalidation of non-regulatory legal acts, illegal decisions and actions (inaction) of the specified bodies, organizations, and their officials, for the purpose of developing and adopting measures aimed at the prevention and elimination of the causes of the discovered violations;
- 4) in accordance with the procedure established by law, specification of qualification requirements to the citizens who apply for public and municipals posts, as well as verification of information provided by these citizens;
- 5) removal from office and (or) dismissal of the persons who occupy public and municipal posts included in the list established by the regulatory legal acts of the Russian Federation, or application of other legal liability measures on the grounds of failure to provide information or provision of knowingly false or incomplete information about their income, expenses, property, and property obligations, as well as provision of knowingly false information about the income, expenses, property, and property obligations of their spouse and minor children;
- 6) development of institutions for social and parliamentary control of compliance with the anti-corruption laws of the Russian Federation.

The professional culture of many representatives of public and municipal authorities is to some extent affected by the attitude of ordinary citizens to the elements of corruption. If the dominant belief

among the population is that officials at various levels are prone to corrupt practices, this attitude translates into everyday management activities, since it subjectively reflects the established social perception that public service allows its employees to take advantage of their position for personal gain.

Improving the organizational framework for the anti-corruption inspection of laws and regulations and their drafts, as well as increasing its efficiency are the crucial problems for the entire legal (and not only legal) community on the way to the formation of a positive professional culture of public officials.

The existence of regulations that allow public (municipal) officials to interpret and apply them arbitrarily is a distinctive feature of corruptogenic legislation. The institution of anti-corruption inspection is currently enshrined in Russian legislation.

Anti-corruption legislation on its own cannot affect the manifestation of different facets of the professional culture of public officials. It should be implemented within the framework of procedures carried out by law enforcement and judiciary authorities. The law enforcement practice of anti-corruption laws and regulations actually shows officials at any level that they are not "untouchable" due to their high official position – on the contrary, such people face stricter requirements from the society and the state.

Public and municipal officials are also expected to meet certain qualification requirements, which are generally the same for these types of service.

Qualification requirements for public service positions are established in accordance with the categories and groups of public service positions. In particular, it is provided that people who apply for a certain position should have the level of education established by legislation (Nikolaeva, 2017).

In addition, public service employees should have a set of professional skills and knowledge that would allow them to perform their executive and administrative duties as public officials (Vasileva & Mirzoyan, 2017).

Qualification requirements to professional knowledge are established by departmental regulations. All of them require mandatory knowledge of the basics of constitutional legislation, sectoral legislation, the fundamentals of the organization of service, office regulations, business ethics, and the basics of office work.

Personnel services check the validity of personal and other information provided by a person when entering on duty, and failure to provide or provision of false information about one's income, expenses (as well as those of one's spouse and minor children) is a grounds for dismissal or other liability.

Introduction of the so-called "right to a career" into the personnel policy should definitely become an effective anti-corruption measure. This means implementing into the personnel practices of public authorities specific rules that prescribe that long-term, flawless, and efficient performance of duties should always be considered when promoting public officials to a higher position.

Measures of general social prevention should also be developed, such as decriminalization of public and municipal activities; strengthening of accountability, transparency, increased role of elections and parliamentary activities; development of mechanisms for the adoption of real budgets; increased role of real tenders for state orders; enhanced transparency when making decisions on the provision of benefits and advantages, promotions; introduction of honest criteria for penalties and incentives; reduction of opportunities for officials to make decisions on their own; increased control over officials by society;

development of ethical and ideological morality of state and social development; increased level of legislative work, establishment of proprietary security services in all public structures.

Public officials have learned to circumvent the law, engaging in other activities (except for teaching, creative and scientific work), including commercial activities through proxies, and receiving "gifts", including in the form of business trips abroad, etc.

Reformation of the public service should involve increasing the salary of public officials; enhancing public control over their activities; strictly differentiating competence and limiting their ability to make decisions at their own discretion; adopting codes of honor among employees; increasing the prestige of the service.

The institutions of civil society can develop public anti-corruption programs; monitor the declaration of information about the property status by public officials; set up their own hotlines to report acts of corruption; promote the fight against corruption; elect their own human rights officers; supervise the investigation of complaints about the actions of officials.

Special preventive measures also need to be taken, such as structural specification of the activities of bodies that perform law enforcement functions with the expansion of their legal capacity, procedural independence, and discretion in decision-making; establishment of a unified information and analytics center for monitoring corruption.

Federal executive authorities are currently engaged in the development of their own anti-corruption standards, which should prevent corruption in this field in accordance with the requirements of the law.

As regards the optimization, unification, and specification of the authority of state bodies and their employees, it should be noted that the mentioned optimization, unification, and specification should be (and gradually are) reflected in the administrative and official regulations governing (as strictly as possible) the activities of the executive bodies.

The order of development and approval of administrative regulations concerning the execution of public functions (rendering of public services) approved by the Government Decree. Pursuant to the said Government Decree, the activity of federal executive authorities in the development and adoption of administrative and official regulations has now enhanced significantly.

These documents usually dedicate particular attention to the terms and sequence of administrative procedures, administrative actions of employees, the order of interaction between the structural divisions of the authorities and their employees with physical and legal entities, elimination of excessive administrative procedures, reduction of document circulation, introduction of the "one window" principle, a decrease in the time of performance of state functions, the responsibility of officials for non-compliance.

Official regulations specify the status of each individual public official.

## **7. Conclusion**

The main idea behind the professional culture of public officials is the possibility of diligent exercise of their powers, protection of the rights and freedoms of people and citizens, serving the interests

of the state. It is based on a complex system of ethical and moral values, which is formed under the influence of a wide range of factors, one of which is the anti-corruption policy pursued by the country.

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that the state's activities aimed at improving the efficiency of anti-corruption measures implies the existence of a single regulatory framework that would ensure coordinated work of public and municipal authorities, and similar approaches to this problem across all levels of the Russian government. This legal framework, which contains a set of measures aimed at combating the potential manifestations of corrupt behavior of public officials, forms the professional culture of a public administration specialist who meets any requirements. Preventive anti-corruption measures serve as a foundation for the appropriate behavior of public and municipal officials, which develops within the framework of anti-corruption standards adopted by certain public bodies. As a result, public officials develop a certain complex of moral and ethical qualities that makes it possible to assess the level of professional culture as a whole.

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