CSIS 2019
11th **International Scientific and Theoretical Conference "Communicative Strategies of Information Society"**

PERCEPTION OF ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE RUSSIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

The anti-corruption policy cannot be effective, if a society has a high tolerance rate toward corruption, and authorities have no clear and consequent anti-corruption strategy. The research on the state anti-corruption policy and evaluation of its effectiveness in mass consciousness allows developing in a society the more effective anti-corruption strategy. This article offers some results from the sociological research on the perception of corruption and anti-corruption policy in Russians' mass consciousness. This research has been carried out by the scholars from St. Petersburg State University using a telephone survey in 2014-2018. The empirical research results are indicative of a lack of significant changes in social consciousness toward corruption in the last decade. There is an obvious contradiction between abstract and personal levels of corruption perception. So, corruption in mass consciousness has been perceived on an abstract level as social evil, but on a personal one as functional necessity to settle private problems.

Keywords: Anti-corruption policy, mass consciousness, attitudes.

1. Introduction

Corruption among different destructive phenomena in Russia holds one of the central positions (Levada Center, 2013). The international anti-corruption movement, Transparency International, has published the CPI for 2018. Russia took 138th place from 180 countries.

It is an important factor to stagnate the economy, also it severely threatens to law superiority, democratic reforms and human rights. As a result, corruption has led to negative social consequences since it shakes confidence in political institutions and governmental structures, harms the image and prestige of Russia as a country.

In 2008, the political course to struggle against corruption was announced in Russia. At the end of 2008, the State Duma enacted the Federal Law «On Counteraction of Corruption» (Federal'nyi zakon «O protivodeistvii korruptsii», 2019), which stated the main principles and legal foundations to struggle against corruption in the Russian state. In this law, the concept of corruption was defined and the forms of its manifestation were determined.

Two years later, the national anti-corruption strategy was adopted (Natsional'naya strategiya protivodeistviya korruptsii, 2019), and in 2012, the national anti-corruption plan was adopted. This plan is aimed at the implementation of strategic measures within the framework of the national security policy of the Russian Federation and the implementation of necessary measures to prevent and combat corruption in Russia.

2. Problem Statement

In 2008, the political course to struggle against corruption was announced in Russia. At the end of 2008, the State Duma enacted the Federal Law «Counteraction of Corruption", (Federal'nyi zakon «O protivodeistvii korruptsii», 2019), which stated the main principles and legal foundations to struggle against corruption in the Russian state. Two years later, the national anti-corruption strategy was adopted (Natsional'naya strategiya protivodeistviya korruptsii, 2019), and in 2012, the national anti-corruption plan was adopted. The first theoretical inquiries about the corruption and anti-corruption policy in modern Russia have appeared in the middle of 1990s (Kirpichnikov, 1997; «Rossiya i korruptsiya: kto kogo», 1998; Rose-Ackerman, 2003). Simultaneously with these processes in 2001-2008, empirical data on the scale, structure and factors which influence on spreading corruption in the sphere of public administration, politics, and business, have been collecting and analyzing.

Among series of corruption studies in later 1990s and early 2000s, it should mark out these ones under the guidance of Satarov (2013), which focus on so called «state» corruption.

The advantage of Satarov's research is that corruption is analyzed as a system social phenomenon to be studied as an issue of deviant behavior and social control. The main line of his works is measuring the corruption rate using mass sociological survey. The results of numerous surveys conducted in 2001-2010 were presented in Satarov's book (Satarov, 2013). Thus, information on corruption and corruption markets was summarized

Some features of corruption perception have been discussed in the article by Martynov and Gaberkorn (2017). When evaluating corruption, as the authors have argued, respondents' attitudes are

contradictory and ambivalent. They have also noted that the significant part of citizens is not ready to refuse corruption as a way to settle their own problems, though the conviction that the measures against corruption are necessary is declared. While studying stereotypes and prejudices towards how corruption has been treated in mass consciousness, Russian scholars emphasize social and psychological features in corruption perception, inconsistency and contradictoriness in Russians' attitudes to corruption. Such an approach can be met also in foreign research (Park & Lee, 2017).

In scientific literature, there are several key approaches to how corruption has to be described: normative-value, legal, economic and functional ones (Nisnevich, 2016).

In Russians' mass consciousness, the normative-value and functional interpretation of corruption is prevalent what is associated with various forms of public authority. In frame of the normative- value approach, corruption is defined conceptually «as the use of public power for private profit, preferment, or prestige, or for the benefit of a group or class, in way that constitutes a breach of law or of standards of high moral conduct; for while such breaches constitute some sort of damage, they are not necessarily involved. But there is typically gain for corrupter and corrupted, and loss for others, involved in such a situation» (Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2005, p.16).

In the context of current policy norms, Russians most often consider corruption as one of the types of deviant social behavior. Corruption is a dynamic phenomenon. It is like a virus that mimics and adapts to changes in political, economic and social conditions, as well as to measures to prevent and struggle it. Therefore, each study of corruption may be suggested as an original and valuable one, as it describes the state and level of its development in a certain period.

3. Research Questions

Ten years ago, Russia took serious political and legal measures to combat corruption. What are the main results of the fight against corruption in Russia? What has changed in the perception of the state anti-corruption policy in the minds of Russians? Why corruption behavior is supported in society, what is the attitude of citizens in this matter? These are just some of the questions we wanted to explore in the empirical analysis.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to present to the scientific community the results of an empirical study on the perception of anti-corruption policy in the mass consciousness of Russians a decade after the start of the national strategy against corruption. Empirical studies of this problem should help to objectively assess the effectiveness of the anti-corruption policy of the Russian Federation and to understand the socio-psychological mechanisms of support for corrupt behavior in the mass consciousness of Russians.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Methodological settings for this study

The main research subject is how corruption is perceived in Russians' mass consciousness after 10 years of declaring the anti-corruption policy. At the beginning of 21st century corruption was treated as one of the principal problems for Russian society. Its scale and spreading tempo was impressive. The Russian government could not more avoid these dangerous processes. It has designed an anti-corruption plan and introduced a normative-value base for the anti-corruption policy.

The theoretical and methodological fundamentals for empirical research on perceiving the corruption and anti-corruption policy in Russian Federation are the theory of social attitudes by Thomas and Znaniecki (1927) and La Piere (1934), and the conception of relationship between value orientations and real conduct of an individual by Yadov (1978). The theories of social attitude emphasize that attitudes are connected with specific (social) needs and conditions for an individual activity to satisfy these needs.

The basic definition of social attitude refers to the correlation of an individual consciousness and individual social action. So, a social attitude is «a process of an individual consciousness; it determines the real and potential activity of an individual in the social world. Thus, a social attitude is a peculiar double of social value in an individual perspective, and an activity in whatever form always is a link between them. The classical model of attitudes compounds three elements: affective (orientation), cognitive (awareness, stereotypes, convictions), connotative (behavioral)» (Devyatkin, 1999). The social attitude characterizes an integral state of personality, capacity of an individual to act in a specific situation by proper manner in order to satisfy own needs.

The social attitudes direct an individual to act in a certain way, but, as V. Yadov proved, it does not preclude the conflict (contradiction) between value orientations and real behavior of individuals.

The previous studies of social and psychological attitudes confirm that the decision to engage in corrupt behavior is not just a choice between right and wrong, but a certain compromise between two competing attitudes. The distinction within attitudes reflects tension between group-based norms (for example, loyalty) and norms that apply universally, independent of group membership (Dungan, Waytz, & Young, 2014).

In the situation of a social choice, the «demand for corruption» attitude forms a response, namely corruption breeds corruption (Ghatak & Iyengar, 2014). Corruption as a social practice is very persistent what can be explained by the lack of true and complete information about corruption among citizens. It does not allow monitoring corruption on local levels and encouraging politicians to limit corruption (Olken, 2009).

5.2. Research methods for this study

The empirical research on the perception of corruption and anti-corruption policy in Russians' mass consciousness was performed at the faculty of sociology in Saint-Petersburg state university in 2014-2018. The matter for empirical research was the corruption and anti-corruption policy in Russian Federation in early 21 century. The subject was the attitudes in Russians' mass consciousness towards the corruption and anti-corruption policy. The telephone survey of Russian population was a method for

collecting empirical data. The advantage of a telephone survey is that it allows organizing two-way communication with the respondent and controlling how full is the information received from him/her.

6. Findings

On answering the question, what social groups most often are involved in corruption activities, 38.2% of respondents noted that the rich was; 38.5% did that the officials and local government employees were. In 2017, 47.7% of St. Petersburg inhabitants surveyed believed officials to be a corrupt group, 44.6% did the majority of Russian businessmen. The study revealed an unexpected fact. Many Russians are poorly informed about the anti-corruption policy of the Russian state.

Table 01. Are you informed on anti-corruption measures realized by the federal authorities?

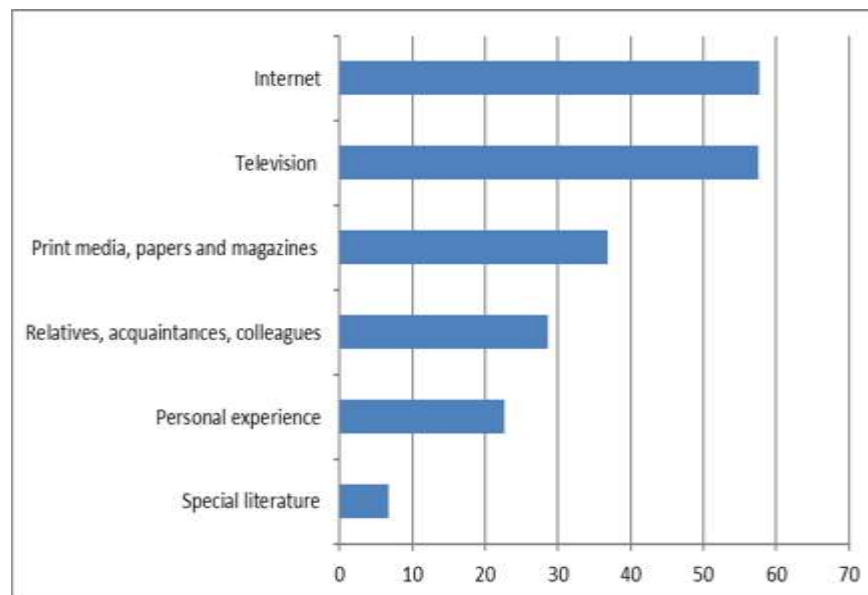| Answer option	%
Known, I do not follow this topic specifically	5.3
I have heard something, but I really do not know	20.7
I do not know anything about it	39.5
I find difficulty in replying	30.7
Known, I do not follow this topic specifically	3.7

Figure 01. Information sources on corrupt practices Saint-Petersburg inhabitants' telephone survey, October 2017, N is 1100

The data from the Table 01 show us that the anti-corruption measures are not enough known on a national level and do not evoke much trust and optimism among the population. But there is a positive tendency.

The corruption perception by mass consciousness is caused to a considerable degree with information field and content, namely with how information is being presented, evaluations and judgments are being imposed in order to form attitudes to one or another corrupt practice.

As can be seen from Figure 01, the Internet and television are the main sources of information on corruption in Russia. They make a major contribution to the formation of attitudes of corruption perception in the Russian Federation.

7. Conclusion

Though the anti-corruption policy is actively implemented in Russia last decade, there is no zero-tolerance rate towards corruption. We need to state that there has not been any significant turn in mass consciousness regarding to corruption. There is an obvious contradiction between abstract and personal levels of corruption perception. In mass consciousness i.e. on an abstract level, corruption has been perceived as a social evil, but on personal level as a functional necessity to settle private problems.

The results of empirical research affirm that corruption directly correlates with the social inequality rate in society. Without decreasing the inequality rate, to receive support for a state anti-corruption policy from population is hardly possible. As long as there is poverty and the social inequality rate is high, anti-corruption measures will be failing. 49.7% of respondents have fully agreed this statement, 23.9% have rather agreed, 11% have rather disagreed, 9% have fully disagreed, and 6.4% of respondents had difficulties in replying.

While struggling against corruption last decade, there was a row of notorious criminal cases, which left their mark in Russians' mass consciousness. But understanding what the state is pursuing a whole, competent and coordinate policy has not been recorded in public opinion. As a significant part of respondents (27%) believe, the anti-corruption policy in Russia has a simulative character, often for show. Many corruption cases that had a public and mass media resonance were not prosecuted. As a consequence the state and court system are treated with distrust.

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