

Corruption in Russian Society: Socio-Psychological and Socio-Cultural Foundations

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ABSTRACT

The problem of the growth of the corruption threat in contemporary Russian society is considered in the article from the position of socio-philosophical knowledge. The initial methodological premise of the study of the corruption phenomenon is the identification of its nature and essence as a negative social fact associated with socio-cultural and socio-psychological processes and factors that affect the worldview of people, their behavior, interaction with each other, their attitude to life, society, and the world. Socio-psychological phenomena are determined among the major factors of the corruption growth in public life (selfishness, egoism, self-interest, a sense of superiority, immoderate consumerism, and acquisitiveness), as well as socio-cultural conditions, the most important of which are social inequality, strong social stratification, technization and human automation, commercialization, and virtualization of the world. Particular importance is given to the existing social alienation in society and a certain moral of the corruption worldview, corruption ideology when comprehending corruption foundations and the behavior of an atomic social subject. Specific attention is paid to the disclosure of this phenomenon in the context of a corrupt or criminal subculture. Priority areas of counteraction against a destructive model of behavior in Russian society are determined in accordance with the position taken in understanding corruption as a model and means of behavior, by dint of which an individual aims at solving certain issues and realizing his or someone's interests.

Keywords: *corruption, corruption crime, ideology of corruption, destructive model of behavior, personality, culture, education*

1. INTRODUCTION

At the turn of 20-21st centuries in contemporary Russian society, the aggravation of socio-cultural, economic and socio-political contradictions that give rise to the growth of socially dangerous acts occurs in the context of the social space globalization, the formation of new socio-economic relations, the construction and renewal of the socio-political mechanism, the transformation of public consciousness, search and cultivation of the value system. Dangerous acts include corruption and destructive crimes. Corruption appears as one of the urgent problems on the way of creating an effective system of state and municipal administration, ensuring law and order and national security in the Russian Federation.

The national anti-corruption strategy, which has a legal basis, is implemented in order to improve public administration in the field of combating corruption in the Russian Federation, taking into consideration international experience (Federal Law of March 8, 2006 No. 40-FZ "On ratification of the United Nations Convention against corruption", Federal Law of December 25, 2008 No. 273-FZ "On combating corruption", Federal Law of November 21, 2011 No. 329-FZ "On amendments to certain

legislative acts of the Russian Federation in connection with improving public administration in the field of anti-corruption", Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of April 13, 2010 No. 460 "On the national anti-corruption strategy and the national anti-corruption plan for 2010-2011").

Besides, the reasons and conditions that determine corruption in Russian society remain despite the measures taken by the state authorities of an organizational, economic, legal, informational and personnel nature aimed at preventing and combating corruption. According to statistical data, the amount of material damage caused by the completed criminal proceedings on corruption crimes amounted to 20.8 billion rubles in 2012, 26bn. rub. – 2013, 39.2bn. rub. – 2014, 32.7bn. rub. – 2015, 76.5bn. rub. – 2016, and 37.4bn. rub. – 2017 [1, p. 62].

It should be borne in mind that the real scale of socially dangerous forms of corruption manifestations and the amount of material damage caused is much higher, given the increased latency of corruption crimes, as well as the current problems in the field of an objective assessment of this type crime condition and its separate types. According to the researchers, crimes of this type "are committed in the form of a two-way "confidential deal", in the exposure of which none of the parties involved is interested" [1, p. 61].

Therefore, the elimination of causes that give rise to corruption offenses and crimes will contribute to the development and implementation of the interests of society, state and the individual. This actualizes the obligation of a socio-philosophical understanding of the corruption phenomenon, highlighting its sociocultural, socio-psychological, economic and socio-political foundations, and identifying ways and means of countering socially dangerous acts of corruption.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In scientific literature, the problem of corruption is studied from the perspective of sociological knowledge (G.A. Satarov et al.), analysis of its socio-psychological parameters (A.L. Zhuravlev, D.A. Kitova, V.A. Sosnin, A.V. Iurevich, et al.), deviantology (Ia.I. Gilinskii), criminology, penal law, and process (V.D. Andrianov, V.V. Luneev, T.N. Moskalkova, et al.). In accordance with the taken position, researchers distinguish the main causes of corruption crimes in different ways, considering corruption as a social, psychological, socio-political, socio-legal, criminological and cultural phenomenon.

For example, some researchers consider paternalism, hierarchy and reliance on informal relations with the authorities, supported by gifts and services, as fundamental characteristics of Russian culture, following the works of Western scholars on the cultural conditioning of corruption [2, pp. 5-6].

According to others, there are peculiarities of the attitude of Russian population to corruption and its connection with the specifics of Russian culture (tolerance to corruption, condemnation of only exorbitant bribes, inconsistency and contradictions) [3, pp. 65-66]. Besides, some scientists also consider that the basic causes of corruption are social, economic, cultural and historical, psychological, legal, and political [4, pp. 5-6]. They believe that a concomitant causative complex influences the state of corruption crime. It includes shortcoming of economic institutions, economic policy, monopolization of economy certain sectors, excessive state control over natural resources, problematic law, a large bureaucratic apparatus, ineffectiveness of the judicial system, as well as the notorious public opinion, the formation of a condescending attitude towards corruption [5, p. 5].

3. RESULTS

The analysis of the available scientific research on corruption issues indicates the complexity and problematic nature of this phenomenon in public life. The question of the need for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach in its study, identifying the nature and essence of this social phenomenon, its definition, emphasizing the causes of socially dangerous types of corruption manifestations is relevant, as well as the search for efficient management

tools and legal technologies aimed at reducing corruption offenses and crimes in modern society.

In turn, we believe that the corruption issue is not a socio-legal, criminological or economic, socio-political problem, but a socio-psychological, socio-cultural, spiritual and moral.

In the given research, we are interested in the nature of this phenomenon.

The term "corruption" means "to spoil" in translation; in Roman law, the term *corrumpere* denoted the activities of several persons aimed at disrupting the normal course of the judicial process or the management of society [6, p. 18].

Corruption is commonly defined in the literature as the performance of any action or inaction by an official in the sphere of his official full powers for a fee (both in violation of job descriptions, and without it) [7, p. 376]. According to Russian law, corruption is understood as a) misuse of office, giving a bribe, accepting a bribe, abuse of power, commercial bribery or other illegal use by an individual of his official position contrary to the legitimate interests of society and the state in order to obtain benefits in the form of money, values, other property or services of a property nature, other property rights for oneself or for third parties, or illegal provision of such benefits to the specified person by other individuals; b) the commitment of these acts on behalf of or in the interests of a legal entity [8]. Such a broad formulation of the "corruption" concept and highlighting its main aspects and features allows us to consider corruption as a negative social phenomenon that neglects and threatens public rules, norms, and laws.

The initial methodological premise of the socio-philosophical study of the corruption phenomenon should be the identification of its nature and essence as the fact of the social life development. The fact is associated with socio-cultural and socio-psychological processes and factors that affect the worldview of people, their behavior, interaction with each other, their attitude to life, society, and the world in general.

From the standpoint of social philosophy, corruption is viewed as a particular socially hazardous form of deviant behavior, a negative social phenomenon, a destructive model of behavior and activity, which is based on selfishness, egoism, self-interest, a sense of superiority, immoderate consumerism, and acquisitiveness. Social factors such as social inequality, alienation, technization and human automation, commercialization and virtualization of the world and such socio-psychological phenomena as discontent, envy, greed generate people's desire to satisfy their multiple needs.

Moreover, they solve material and social issues illegally by using their position in the bureaucratic apparatus, the system of state and municipal administration. At the same time, the social alienation that exists in society negatively affects not only the activities and behavior of the atomic social subject, but also his consciousness and moral qualities, adhering to selfish views, unable to meet other people, provide assistance, yield or conclude a compromise, lead equal and constructive dialogue. Such behavior and attitude to life, people, society presupposes

the availability of a certain morality, a corrupt worldview, a corrupt ideology, giving meaning to one's actions and deeds, expressing a relation to the existing society.

Consideration of corruption as a socio-cultural phenomenon assumes an understanding of this phenomenon in the context of a corrupt or criminal subculture. The study of corrupt behavior and corruption relations makes it possible to clearly identify corruption schemes and algorithms of bribable actions, their methods, to determine the main factors and mechanisms of corruption, to identify the reasons and conditions for the formation and functioning not only in Russia, but also in many other countries of the near abroad [9].

It is required to comprehensively approach the study of this social form of interaction and behavior, to distinguish the structure, major elements, mechanisms, stages of formation and functioning when issuing about the corruption subculture and its worldview, valuable and ideological, as well as psychological aspects. Corrupt subcultures are a combination of certain worldview values, ideas, beliefs, norms and rules of behavior. Carriers of such subcultures are social groups or associations of people adhering to deviant norms and values, views, specific valuable orientations.

Representatives of corrupt subcultures can demonstrate their unity through a specific way of life, a manner of interpreting symbols, ideas and views, creating network relationships both vertically and horizontally, that is, establishing corrupt relationships between various social groups and subgroups. These network corruption relations can permeate the entire society, all spheres of public life, manifest at the level of state and municipal government, etc. Such social mobility of bribable subcultures, their stability, reproduction and evolution becomes possible due to their properties and mechanisms. Researchers define the following mechanisms of corruption subcultures that ensure their viability.

Self-regulation allows corrupt subcultures to keep the structure in balance; self-organization permits these phenomena to have spontaneity properties of appearance and distribution; self-preservation ensures the preservation of the norms and values of the subculture for their further reproduction in the social or socio-professional practice of its carriers [9]. In this regard, its own ideology is characteristic of this subculture type, which consists in opposition to the social values of democratic society, demonstration of rejection of its values.

A significant aspect of corrupt activities is the corresponding ideology being a set of ideas, views of an asocial nature, which are carried by various social subjects, justifying their use of various illegitimate means and methods for the realization of personal, narrow-grouped, and corporate interests.

Corruption ideology appears to be a position directed against general democratic norms, values, through bribery, deception, abuse of office, pressure and use of force, threats, manipulation and impact on public consciousness. Therefore, corruption takes place in those countries in which democratic values are absent or formally declared, a low culture of the population is demonstrated, as well as

social inequality, the omnipotence of the bureaucracy, and effective control over state institutions, including law enforcement is absent.

Consideration of bribable relations from the perspective of corruption subcultures being a special type of subculture, which is based on the norms of value that legitimize this form of deviant behavior, provides an opportunity for the development of specific tools for measuring the corruption level and determining steps to counter the phenomenon.

Following the situation of corruption understanding, we can question the position of a number of researchers who, using statistical methods, tried to link corruption and its level either with the hierarchy of the prevailing religion in the country [10], or with the share of protestants in the population of each of 64 countries [11, 12]. Besides, they compared countries with religious confessions like Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism with countries that have tribal religions and reformed Christian Protestantism and Anglicanism [13].

Religion cannot be defined by the cultural factor of corruption, given the experience of Singapore in resolving the problem of corruption crimes and offenses, in which, due to historical characteristics and ethnic diversity, such religious confessions as Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Taoism are represented, and where there is practically no religious extremism. On the contrary, one can consider Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism and other religious confessions on the example of historical traditional religions in our country as one of the cultural factors that have great potential not only for the spiritual development of the individual, but also of society as a whole. The low level of organizational, professional, legal or moral cultures in public life is one of the crucial reasons for the bribable subculture emergence.

Therefore, negative changes in the way of people lives, their cultural values have a destructive impact on their consciousness, perception of the world, which negatively affects their behavior, life, communication presupposing mutual respect for the subjects of communication. The ongoing changes in the socio-cultural space, in which moral values are devalued and the habitual image of the world around is destroyed, can lead to socio-psychological and socio-cultural processes that cause corruption relations and the corresponding psychological attitudes, value orientations.

In addition, the basic reasons and conditions for the corruption growth include strong social stratification, low activity of citizens in public and political life, and poor life quality. It is no coincidence that corruption is mainly manifested in those societies where there are no growth prospects and conditions for self-realization. Community is conditioned by the social conditions of self-realization of active people, an increase in the share of citizens employed in small and medium-sized businesses, their participation in the preparation and adoption of managerial decisions, the ability to take an active part in the development of society and the state.

It is safe to say that corruption acts as a model and means of behavior, by dint of which an individual aims at solving certain issues and realizing his or someone's interests.

Therefore, the primary task of studying such a complex social phenomenon as corruption includes finding answers to the questions: Why do people commit acts of corruption? What is the main reason for corruption? For what purpose and in whose interests are corruption offenses committed?

4. CONCLUSION

Comprehending socio-psychological and socio-cultural foundations of corruption in Russian society suggests that solution of this problem requires a complex and systematic approach, involving measures of an organizational and economic, legal, informational, personnel, psychological, social and cultural nature aimed at preventing and anti-corruption. It is required on the part of the state and society to purposefully counteract corruption offenses and crimes, including preventive work, so that a “zero” tolerance for this format of deviant behavior is formed in the public consciousness. It should be borne in mind that the emphasis on mandatory and coercive mechanisms and measures used in the practice of law enforcement agencies in countering corruption does not allow eradicating the socio-psychological and socio-cultural roots of the negative social phenomenon.

Consideration of corruption as a socio-cultural and socio-psychological phenomenon indicates that the state should promote the establishment of dialogue and cooperation with various social groups and associations on the way to solving urgent issues of public life. It should actively involve specialists, sociologists and psychologists in dealing with existing problems, and pursue a balanced policy in all spheres of public life in order to develop economic, socio-political, national, spiritual and cultural relations.

The manifestations of corrupt subcultures and the corresponding ideas, norms and values, asocial views and approaches in society can be associated not only with the existing carriers, subjects of bribable relations, but also with social conditions, among which the most essential are social stratification and alienation. Low levels of solidarity, trust and respect remain relevant in contemporary Russian society.

It is indispensable that citizens understand each other, define their position (rights and obligations) in relation to others, their place (status) in the social structure, and social roles; follow appropriate patterns of behavior and strive to realize common interests and goals for productive social interaction. A level of social interaction characteristic of mutual understanding, assistance, cooperation, partnership, respect and trust, is required. The level of social interaction, the manifestation of assistance, and help to each other determines the full and comprehensive development of a person as a social subject with a developed and profound worldview, the necessary social qualities that correspond to the contemporary world.

Besides, one of the serious reasons for the spread of corrupt ideology is the low quality of education, meaning the availability of not formal, but true, deep knowledge. It

is substantial that an educated person or a certificated specialist has economic, legal, psychological, and humanitarian knowledge. Since awareness allows having independent critical thinking and being able to resist various manipulations, external influences from any social groups, associations, institutions, including the mass media, the global Internet.

It is essential to actively and purposefully carry out a systematic and comprehensive preventive cultural, educational, informational and ideological agitation work among all strata and groups of the population in order to combat corruption. It is crucial to take into consideration their peculiarities through mass communication, including electronic, aimed at increasing the cultural, spiritual and moral development of citizens.

Knowing this phenomenon actualizes the concept development issues of national (state) values and priorities, implementation of balanced social policy, creation of conditions for personal self-realization, citizen education, improving the quality of humanitarian education in the system of academic institutions of various levels.

Such values as a responsible attitude to society, high confidence of the population in the institutions of power, respectful and attentive attitude of citizens to each other are strengthened in public life, along with mutual assistance, active participation in public and political life, strict observance of the law and its support, observance of the principles of justice and freedom in all spheres of social life.

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