

THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION IN MODERN RUSSIA

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Corruption, as a phenomenon is known to people since the ancient times. This is not one of the oldest, and not a new phenomenon in the social reality. Already more than seven centuries, as historians say, mankind quite successfully has been fighting against this evil. But in the beginning of the third Millennium we, the people, has not managed to eradicate corruption in the full sense of the word.

Corruption is a phenomenon which can occur in any country of the world. No matter if the country is poor or rich, democratic or authoritarian, big or small – it will not avoid corruption.

What is corruption? According to the encyclopedia, corruption is "the use of civil servants (officials) and representatives of public authorities, their position, their official rights and powers for illicit enrichment, receipt and use of material advantages and other benefits, both in personal and selfish purposes."

A bribe is the most typical, dangerous and widespread phenomenon, which is not only the official crime, but a typical manifestation of corruption. The subject of this crime is not only money, securities, other property, but also a variety of benefits, mainly, of course, of material nature.

There are several types of corruption, such as political corruption, data corruption, and linguistic corruption. However, political corruption is the most popular.

Political corruption is the use of powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain. An illegal act by an officeholder constitutes political corruption only if the act is directly related to their official duties, is done under color of law or involves trading in influence.

Forms of corruption vary but include bribery, Influence peddling, patronage, nepotism and cronyism, electoral fraud, embezzlement, kickbacks and other.

Bribery is an act of giving money or gift to alter the behavior of the recipient. Bribery constitutes a crime. A bribe is a payment given personally to a government official in exchange of his official powers use. Bribery requires two participants: one to give the bribe and another to take it. Either may initiate the corrupt offering; for example, a customs official may demand bribes to let through allowed (or disallowed) goods, or a smuggler might offer bribes to gain the passage.

Influence peddling is the illegal practice of using one's influence in a government or connections with persons in authority to obtain favors or preferential treatment usually in return for payment. Also it is called traffic of influence or trading in influence.

Patronage refers to favoring supporters, for example with government employment. This may be legitimate, as when a newly elected government changes the top officials in the administration in order to effectively implement its policy. It can be seen as corruption if this means that incompetent persons are selected before more able ones in a payment for supporting the regime.

Favoring relatives (nepotism) or personal friends (cronyism) of an official is a form of illegitimate private gain. This may be combined with bribery. Cronyism is partiality to long-standing friends, especially by appointing them to positions of authority, regardless of their qualifications. Hence, cronyism is contrary in practice and principle to meritocracy.

Electoral fraud is illegal interference with the process of an election. Acts of fraud affect vote counts to bring about an election result, whether by increasing the vote share

of the favored candidate, depressing the vote share of the rival candidates, or both. Also called voter fraud, the mechanisms involved include illegal voter registration, intimidation at polls, and improper vote counting.

Embezzlement is theft of entrusted funds. It is political when it involves public money taken by a public official for use by anyone not specified by the public. A common type of embezzlement is that of personal use of entrusted government resources; for example, when an official assigns public employees to renovate his own house.

A kickback is a form of negotiated bribery in which a commission is paid to the bribe-taker as a quid pro quo for services rendered. Generally speaking, the remuneration (money, goods, or services handed over) is negotiated ahead of time. The kickback varies from other kinds of bribes in that there is implied collusion between agents of parties, rather than one party extorting the bribe from the other. The purpose of the kickback is usually to encourage the other party to cooperate in the illegal scheme.

In politics, corruption undermines democracy and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal processes. Corruption in elections and in the legislature reduces accountability and distorts representation in policymaking; corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and corruption in public administration results in the inefficient provision of services. It violates a basic principle of republicanism regarding the centrality of civic virtue. More generally, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government if procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. Corruption undermines the legitimacy of government and such democratic values as trust and tolerance.

Corruption also generates economic distortions in the public sector by diverting public investment into capital projects where bribes and kickbacks are more plentiful. Officials may increase the technical complexity of public sector projects to conceal or pave the way for such dealings, thus further distorting investment. Corruption also lowers compliance with construction, environmental, or other regulations, reduces the quality of government services and infrastructure, and increases budgetary pressures on government.

Corruption in Russia is a significant problem that impacts the lives of Russia's citizens. Russia is on the 133rd place out of 176 (tied with Comoros, Guyana, Honduras, Iran, and Kazakhstan) in the Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International. According to some expert estimates, the market for corruption in the country exceeded US\$240 billion in 2006.

According to a poll conducted in early 2010, 15% of Russians reported to have paid a bribe in the past 12 months. The overall amount of bribes in Russian economy during the last decade skyrocketed from \$33 billion to more than \$400 billion per year in Putin's government.

Former president Dmitry Medvedev made fighting corruption one of the top agendas of his presidency, and launched an anti-corruption campaign.

In modern Russia, it is widely accepted that corruption is one of the main obstacles to the country's economic development. The average bribe that Russian businessmen offer to civil servants increased from US\$10,000 to US\$136,000. More than half of adult population has direct experience in giving bribes.

Some people believe that there is no real fight against corruption in Russia: arrests of middle level civil servants do nothing to curb corruption, and there is no real anti-corruption policy.

The 2009 study showed that the global financial crisis only encouraged corruption: in the last year it grew globally by 9%. Corrupt civil servants and politicians in developing countries, including Russia, receive annually US\$20-US\$40 billion in bribes. From January to August 2009, 10 581 cases of graft were registered – 4% more than a year prior.

The Russian government recognises corruption as one of the most serious problems facing the country, and has taken steps to counter it. Fighting corruption has been a top agenda of President Dmitry Medvedev. An Anti-Corruption Council was established by Medvedev in 2008 to oversee Russia's anti-corruption campaign. The central document guiding the effort is the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, introduced by Medvedev in 2010.

I think a big minus of corruption is that it causes damage to the state in the sphere of economy, reducing the total wealth of the nation and its citizens. Besides all this threatens to with total loss of trust to the power.