

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

On October 26–27, 2018, the Third All-Russian Scientific Conference with international participation “Current issues of scientific provision for the Russian Federation’ state policy in combating corruption” took place. It was organized by the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences with the financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, grant No 18-011-20077. This conference was the continuation of a cycle of two conferences previously held in accordance with the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2014-2015. About ninety scientists and university professors from different Russian cities had attended the event.

The purpose of the conference was to consider the problems of interdisciplinary scientific support of the Russian Federation state policy in the field of combating corruption, as well as to develop scientific and expert recommendations for its improvement. Preemptive attention was paid to the theoretical and methodological foundations of the fight against corruption; the disclosure of the institutional capacity of civil society and authorities in combating corruption; the prevention of conflicts of interest and the ethical issues of countering corruption; and Russian and international experience in creating new institutions areas.

The first two conferences (2014 and 2015) had been directly provided by the National Anti-Corruption Plan; the current forum was held by the Institute on its own initiative. It should be noted that the scientists demonstrated a high level of reports and discussions on them.

Combating corruption is one of the most challenging issues of public administration. Today, only the total amount of funds spent on so-called “kickbacks” is estimated at almost 2% of the country’s GDP, reaching twenty billion dollars; this has an extremely negative effect on citizens’ trust in establishment authority.

In 2018, it was 10 years since the Federal Law “On Combating Corruption” (No. 273-FZ of December 25, 2008) was adopted. During this time, an unprecedented layer of anti-corruption legislation has been created in Russia, which never existed in the Russian Empire or the USSR. These efforts were not in vain: the country moved from 147th place to 119th in the international rankings in 2016; however, then again dropped to 130th place. Apparently, each accepted model of anti-corruption has its own limits of application. Much of what is possible now has already been done, and certain results of this work are now visible; nevertheless, the very phenomenon of corruption takes on extremely varied forms, changing after the development of socio-economic and political relations.

Traditionally, it is considered that democratic states are able to fight corruption successfully due to their intrinsic state power openness, the rule of law, and a free judicial system. Nevertheless, today it is worth to expand the field of research and pay special attention to the experience of countries that are quite authoritarian in the political system, and have achieved significant success in combating corruption; such example is the experience of Singapore. It is now being seriously studied by our Kazakh colleagues, for whom the topic of transforming their political regime into a meritocracy is highly relevant.

During the conference, four plenary sessions were organized; there were many high-level reports presented on various aspects of combating corruption in Russia and worldwide. The present collection of research papers is based on the conference’s design; the titles of parts of the collection correspond to the titles of conference sessions. It is hardly possible to give full informative review of all research papers in a limited volume; therefore, only several of them as the most representative for each session are selected for the review.

The first part “Perspective Turns in Understanding the Phenomenon of Corruption”, is devoted to the problem of clarifying or even redefining the existing concepts of corruption.

Ya. Yu. Startsev, Candidate of Political Sciences, (Yekaterinburg) analyzed the main changes in the frequency of anti-corruption vocabulary in his bright presentation “Features of modern anti-corruption discourse”, reflecting the degree of relevance of anti-corruption themes in the public discourse of higher authorities.

The main differences in the anti-corruption agenda of the supreme bodies of state power, and the direction of its evolution for each authority (an official) were identified. The distribution of the roles of different authorities in shaping the agenda was established,

where “the problematization” is the prerogative of the President of the Russian Federation, while “the thematization” in the context of current tasks and priorities is the Prime Minister’s responsibility. A repressive bias of the anti-corruption agenda was established, which was strengthened especially in the presidential 2009-2018 discourse.

In the presentation “Civil society, scandals and exposing corruption”, professor J. Favarel-Garrig (Paris) explains that combating corruption is an independent social problem, which is not directly related to the problem of corruption as such. The production of anti-corruption measures allows to set priorities, and distribute powers and means: there are important resources for those who possesses them. There are two types of such resources: competitive political resources that correlate with anti-corruption policy, and the resources that the fight against corruption represents in the depths of civil society for specialization.

Based on comparative data and constructivist approach, the author shows that the formation of “factories of scandals” aimed at exposing political, administrative, and economic officials becomes the central problem that combating corruption creates. The author convincingly describes how the anti-corruption trend is used by political elites to fight competitors, and by the opposition to legitimize their own activities.

The second part “The Potential of Modern Society in Countering Corruption”, is focused on the interaction of the state and the dialogue-oriented business, as well as on the compensatory functions of corruption.

The presentation “Anti-corruption policy and the mechanism of securitization of social problems” is made by D. V. Berezhnyakov and S. V. Kozlov (Siberian Institute of Management, Branch of The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation). The authors emphasize that today the anti-corruption discourse is the most important feature of political and administrative logic of neoliberalism, both at global and national level. At the same time, the scientific consideration of this problem requires distancing from the normative ideological attitude, which presupposes the legitimization of the current state of the effectiveness of public administration. In this perspective, the phenomenon of corruption could be viewed as a social problem that is actively constructed by a variety of public policy actors using various rhetorical strategies in this process. Accordingly, the “public career success” as a constructed

social problem, and its ability to get into the institutional agenda of government bodies is defined both by the resources of those actors who promote it, as well as by the immanent characteristics of the problem itself; in other words, by those ways, in which one or another segment of social reality is thematized.

Another interesting paper “Corruption in Russia and the fight against it as a simulacrum” is presented by Yu. G. Ershov, Doctor of Philosophy (Yekaterinburg). The paper is devoted to the acute problems of the studying corruption’s methodology in the context of social philosophy, and the theory of neo-modernization. The author points to the successive connection of the USSR and Russia as societies of a mixed, intermediate nature, which did not fully solve the tasks of modernization, combining the features of both traditionalism and modernity.

The declarative nature of many ideas of the rule of law, and the absence of independent justice often turns the fight against corruption into a means of intra-elite struggle for power and enrichment, and a tool for redistributing spheres of influence, resources, and incomes. An interesting issue was raised by the S. V. Obolkina, Candidate of Philosophy (Yekaterinburg) in the paper “Corruption in the system of general cultural representations: the problem of the antonym”. It is emphasized that there is no real antonym for the word “corruption” in Russian language. Consequently, the ideal state that should be reached by the countermeasure system is simply not defined.

In the third part, “Social Sciences Resources, Civic Participation and Civil Institutions in Countering Corruption,” several levels of corrupt practices, as well as their regional, and institutional areas are analyzed.

For example, P. Panov, Doctor of Political Sciences, (Perm) in his paper “Competitions for the elections of heads of local governments: the component of corruption” demonstrates that the range of practices that can corrupt the competitive model is actually quite wide. Based on the example of several empirical cases of holding competitions for electing the heads of municipalities, it is shown that such range includes practices from informal binding “endorsements” of the candidate by the governor (the practice of “reconciliation”) to harsh pressure and coercion against members of competitive commissions, deputies, and candidates up to the breakdown of competitive procedure.

Another Perm researcher, V. Kovin, in the paper “On some mechanisms of electoral corruption in the sphere of regional policy

management (based on materials of modern lawsuits)” considers some mechanisms of electoral corruption based on anti-corruption lawsuits materials. He concludes that law enforcement and judicial systems are not yet ready to combat systematically manifestations of electoral corruption. As to their effectiveness in this direction, it depends on the presence of political will.

L. Saburova, Candidate of Philosophy (Izhevsk) attempts to identify corruption risks and manifestations of corruption in a specific professional sphere – in academic science. It is shown that unlike many other spheres of public life (state and municipal government, law enforcement, education, and medicine) corruption relations in the scientific community are less often become the subject of scientific study despite the fact that public interest in the phenomenon of “fake science” in recent years has been growing. Due to certain closeness of the academic environment, and the less obvious social significance of the results of scientific activity, science in many studies is not even mentioned as a subject to corruption, which, of course, does not mean its invulnerability to corruption processes.

The fourth part “Problems of Forming New Institutions, Practices and Values in the Anti-Corruption System: Russian and International Experience”, is focused on the analysis and synthesis of historical and modern anti-corruption achievements.

The resonant paper by A. Belousov, Candidate of Political Sciences (Yekaterinburg) “The problem of ‘revolving doors’ in the European Union and the USA” examines the phenomenon of so-called “revolving doors” – the transition of lobbying firms into the private sector or public service, which is spread all over the world. Its relevance is justified by the fact that according to various estimations, in the USA more than half a thousand former congressional representatives were involved in lobbying activities; from 1998 to 2008, 41% of all lobbyists had experience in government agencies. In addition to the very fact of a large number of lobbyists, it is also important that up to 56% of the income received by lobbying firms is associated with their participation. Based on this, a number of researchers are inclined to believe that the phenomenon of “revolving doors” is quite similar to corruption. The paper contains critical assessment, which makes it possible to speak of “revolving doors” as institutional corruption. Within its framework, legal systematic and strategic influence is exercised transforming the traditional economy into an influential economy itself.

P. A. Kabanov, Doctor of Law, (Kazan) considers no less interesting topic “Anti-corruption procedural legislation of the constituent

entities of the Russian Federation governing the procedure for conducting verification of information on the property status of certain categories of persons”. According to the presenter’s conclusions, the anti-corruption procedural legislation of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation as a relatively new area needs regular legal monitoring and improvement.

The researcher proposes ways to improve the anti-corruption procedural legislation of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, which regulates the issues of checking the completeness, and accuracy of the information provided on the property status of certain categories of individuals. Among those measures are the following: expanding the list of initiators of the property status check; securing the dates for the decision by authorized persons to conduct verification of information on property status; settlement of issues related to the refusal of the employer in the appointment of the audit, termination of the started audit, withdrawal of the sent requests, replacement of the participants of the verification activity (the basis and procedure); and determination of the legal status of the representative of the inspected person.

During the conference, all presentations were followed by a vivid discussion, which was greatly facilitated by the interdisciplinary nature of the problem. As one of the speakers noted, “It seems that only philosophers have secret knowledge about corruption, but lawyers have to deal with it”. It was noted that the legal tools used now by law enforcement agencies are focused on administrative corruption, namely, on state and municipal officials of lower and average level. Indeed, corruption there is declining, both in the number of cases brought up, and simply in the results of the included observation (“For the attempts to buy driving license now the number of proposals has decreased in a number of times”).

At the same time, *vox pops* show that more than half of the citizens are ready to use bribing officials to solve their problems. In fact, a request for violation of the law comes from the society. However, some speakers were inclined to consider corruption as a violation of justice rather than the law. The ideas about justice may differ significantly among business entities. In general, the syndrome of “addiction” to corruption indicates a deviation from legality in favor of traditional practices of the “patron-client” type.

Часть I

Перспективные повороты в осмыслении феномена коррупции

Part I

Perspective trends in understanding the phenomenon of corruption