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GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY IN PANDEMIC AND INFODEMIC¹

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Abstract: The article analyzes some preliminary results of the Russian authorities' fight against the pandemic caused by the previously unknown infection Covid-19. The interconnection between the pandemic and the infodemic complicating the authorities' responsibility not only for the physical but also for the mental health of the nation is considered here. The features of government responsibility during the pandemic, changes in labour and other legislation, threats to the mental development and mental health of the younger generation due to the mass transition to distance education caused by the pandemic are considered.

Keywords: pandemic, responsibility of authorities, legislation, unemployment, distance education, restrictions on freedom of movement.

1. Introduction

Despite the new political realities over the last three decades, which have fundamentally changed all the systemic characteristics of society, government and law, there is still interest in legal responsibility, as the topic has timeless relevance and practical importance. The paradox is that the actual and significant questions of constitutional responsibility of government bodies have been developed fragmen-

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tarily (in relation to individual authorities but not in general) and not yet considered in pandemic and infodemic aspect. Furthermore, the system and concepts of responsibility differ from country to country and an interstate comparison is of particular cognitive value.

The problem of government responsibility gets a new meaning and requires a completely new methodological and comprehensive approach, as the structure of government authorities in both countries has changed and continues to change, the implementation of the principle of separation of powers, potential and actual conflicts arising under it; hidden and made public; systemic and local; etc.

Responsibility is a key element of the legal policy of the government, which it is impossible to count on the success of any legal policy, any reform and any modernization without.

The scientific novelty and practical value of the article lies in the systemic approach to the range of problems with an emphasis on overcoming certain clichés and stereotypes in science, mistakes in law-making and false presumptions established in practice. The aim of the article is to study the responsibility of government bodies in systematic interconnection of all its elements, to identify the impact of various challenges to the responsibility of authorities (turbulence of changing values in the world, globalism, migration processes, pandemic, and infodemic) and to develop practical recommendations for scientists, lawmakers and law enforcement authorities.

The scientific works of such authors as S. Avakyan, A. Bayer, D. Bell, M. Bekhterev, N. Bekhtereva, Drukker, S. Freud, D. Gellup, A. Maly, A. Milechin, A. Morhat, V. Nevinsky, D. Pugh, A. Pentland, Ya. Tikhomirov, T. Khabrieva, D. Habermas, D. Hixon, V. Khalin, L. Harlon, A. Handler, V. Chervonyuk, O. Chepverikova, V.H. Emerson, etc. are dedicated to the pandemic and the e-government.

2. How pandemic affects responsibility of public actors

The Federal Law of 30.03.1999 No. 52-FZ On the Sanitary and Epidemiological Well-Being of the Population (hereinafter the Law No. 52-FZ) is in effect in Russia. This law defines infectious diseases as occurring and spreading diseases by biological factors of the environment (pathogens of infectious diseases) exposure pathway and transmitted from a diseased person or animal to a healthy person. Herewith, infectious diseases that pose a danger to others are defined as follows: "... infectious diseases of humans characterized by a severe course, high mortality and disability rates, and rapid spread among the population (epidemics)"¹.

¹ Федеральный закон от 30.03.1999 № 52-ФЗ «О санитарно-эпидемиологическом благополучии населения» (с изменениями и дополнениями от 26.07.2019 № 232-ФЗ) // Собрание законодательства. 1999. № 14. Ст. 1650. [Federal Law No. 52-FZ On Sanitary and Epidemiologic Well-Being of the Population]

The Law No. 52 is similar to the US law on the National Environmental Policy¹, and also takes into account the US practice in the fight against AIDS².

On 25.03.2020, V. V. Putin, the President of Russia, announced a so-called “long weekend” from Saturday (March 28) to Sunday (April 5, 2020), across Russia in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic, so that the country’s residents would stay at home. This was called self-isolation. So far, the word “quarantine” has not even been uttered, but already on 30.03.2020. V. V. Putin again addressed the citizens of Russia and announced the extension of the quarantine for Moscow and Moscow region until April 13, 2020. The fact is that many citizens took the self-isolation regime not in the literal sense, but as an additional holiday: walking in yards and parks, barbecuing on the embankments of rivers and lakes, going on visits, to country cottages, etc. As a result, the coronavirus statistics rose by hundreds of people over the weekend and by Monday, March 30, there were already more than 1,800 infected.

Together with the quarantine a tax holiday for businesses, a deferral of utility bills for individuals and legal entities, a call to landlords to suspend rent payments to tenants for a certain period and other economic, legal and organizational measures have been undertaken. Holiday centers and recovery centers are closed until 01.06.2020. The Russian government has promised interest-free loans to small and medium-sized businesses after the end of the quarantine, provided there are no job cuts.

The public responsibility for some management structures is being postponed for a definite (or indefinite?) time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, on March 17, 2020, Aleksandr Mitrofanov, the deputy chairperson of the Samara primary organization of the Deistvie interregional union of workers of public health services, has informed that all-Russia protest action of employees of ambulance service is postponed in territory of the Samara region. A similar suspension of protest actions took place all over Russia. It is not known how long the uncertainty will last but it seems that some authorities will take advantage of the uncertainty, including in their economic interests. According to Chronograf newspaper, Mikhail Ratmanov, the Minister of Healthcare of Samara region, can calmly wait till the end of outsourcing of Samara city ambulance station vehicle fleet³. Meanwhile, the experience of other regions showed that in places where ambulance service was transferred to outsourcing, salaries of ambulance drivers went down by 30–40%. In Samara

¹ Закон о национальной экологической политике 1969 года. Pub. Л. № 91–190. § 102, 83 Stat. 852, 853 (1970) (с поправками 1975 года). [National Environmental Policy Act 1969]

² Harlon L. AIDS Law. Dalton et al. Eds., 1987. 177 p.

³ Кошеров Е. Пандемия вывезла // Хронограф. 2020. Март. С. 4. [Kosherov E. Pandemia vyvezla [Pandemic took to safety].

Region, ambulance staff is assured that working conditions will not deteriorate after the transfer to outsourcing. Declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic by Tedros Ghebreyesus, the director general of the World Health Organization on March 11, saved the regional government from threats of mass protests and Italian strikes. However, it seems that Italian panic caused by the coronavirus came instead of the Italian strikes.

The postponed protest and the sudden calm are also beneficial for Igor Komarov, the Presidential Plenipotentiary Representative for the Volga Federal District, because “in case of mass protests (...) his chair could be shaken under him”¹. The head of the Department for Internal Policy of the apparatus of the named plenipotentiary has this to say about the situation: “The apparatus of the plenipotentiary is constantly monitoring the social and political situation in the regions of the Volga federal district. Crisis situations are discussed with the authorities in the federal subjects of the district”².

Thus, the epidemiological situation does not permit rallies and protests. The epidemic has confused plans of ambulance workers to fight for their labour rights and legitimate interests.

However, most authorities and responsible officials are on high alert to fight this epidemiological scourge. The police, doctors, hotline staff and other services are working almost non-stop. But in many parts of Russia, neither doctors nor ambulance workers, who are in the front line of the fight, are issued one pair of gloves and one mask a day (at a time when they are only useful for a maximum of two hours), and protective suits are out of the question. Police officers were obliged to visit the apartments of quarantined persons and draw up reports on their presence/absence in home quarantine. At the same time, police officers have no protective equipment at all (no masks, gloves or shoe covers). Reports on absence of a person in quarantine place results in fines about which amount police chiefs report and some district police officers have to cheat, being afraid to be infected and bring the disease in their families (make fictitious reports and sign for the inspected persons).

Further. The medical state of people arriving from abroad (at least with a thermometer for fever) was not checked and there were no announcements about the necessity of 14-day home quarantine were made up to the announcement of week quarantine in airports of many cities. The ambulance did not arrive until 6–8 hours later and did not see one patient with symptoms of acute respiratory viral infection until the next day, citing busy schedules. Some citizens could not get through to the hotline, and there were two hotlines in one city that referred callers to each

¹ Кошеров Е. Пандемия вывезла // Хронограф. 2020. Март. С. 4. [Kosherov E. Pandemia vyvezla [Pandemic took to safety].

² Ibid.

other, i.e. they engaged in so-called buck passing. T. Golikova, the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of health care, initially assured that everything was under control in Russia.

The British Prime Minister first urged not to panic and to let the situation run its course naturally, so to speak, as a result of which the British will acquire collective immunity, i.e. the British people should realise that some of them will die, but the nation as a whole will get stronger. This stance has been criticised in the UK itself and internationally as cynical, forcing the Prime Minister to change not only the rhetoric, but also government policy. Curiously, a little later, among the high-profile names of Covid-19 sufferers (singer Lev Leshchenko and his wife, composer Yuri Nikolayev, actor and government Duma member Nikolai Gubenko and his wife actress Zhanna Bolotova, Senator Lyudmila Narusova and others), the name of the UK Prime Minister was also mentioned.

The situation started to change only after the Address of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, to the citizens of Russia on TV on March 25, 2020. The rhetoric of all authorities changed, the horrors of Covid-19 and harsh actions by authorities in other countries (fines and criminal liability, hitting those who walk the streets with police batons), empty studios of popular TV shows, a lot of social advertising about Covid-19 prevention measures, and TV messages from leaders of other countries, often simply hysterical, began to be shown en masse on TV. The panic of officials was apparently the trigger for panic and psychosis among the population.

The 2020 pandemic revealed a crisis of national leaders, many of whom proved incapable of controlling the situation and appeared to be capable of hysteria and panic, which is in no way consistent with their high positions (mayors in Italy, Spain, USA). For some people this has caused a sense of squeamishness, and globally, a new wave of social psychosis.

In Russia, however, social psychosis has been minimal. Even the news on the Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin was down with the Covid-19 was received calmly. The Prime Minister himself calmly endured the illness and was quickly resuscitated. Perhaps this calmness is helped by the Russian humour. Thus, jokes about the illness of Prime Minister immediately spread all over the Internet. For example, this one: "For those who are interested in Mishustin's well-being, we inform: Mishustin's well-being is immense!».

Some academics, even those critical of Russian authoritarianism, noted the Russian leader's dignified composure and the effectiveness of authoritarian methods in the pandemic situation, methods of anticipation. However, some scholars stress that Russia's generally inefficient management (in terms of economics) has proven effective in the Covid-19 situation, for "it has so far succeeded in countering the

pandemic due to good organization and co-operation of the relevant services and structures”¹.

This is understandable, because the distance between the possible negative results of the pandemic and the possibility of losing one’s own chair for the managers is the shortest.

3. Social psychosis and its characteristics

People communicate daily, hourly, minute by minute on their phones, tablets, laptops and exchange pictures and videos of the most varied spectrum from total disbelief in the supposedly inflated danger (irony, cynicism, sarcasm, healthy arguments with figures, appeals for calm, fatalistic philosophy, etc. panic (buying up food and basic necessities, following all advice, even the absurd and mutually exclusive ones, or, on the contrary, stupor, frustration, depression, etc.). Emotions of some people swing between these states, they do not know who or what to believe in, they are terrified at the prospect of losing their job or business.

There are all kinds of preventive measures on the world wide web! Jokes on the subject are also appearing. For example: “You can’t trust anyone! I was told it’s enough to wear a mask and gloves outside as a preventative measure. So I did! But others wore clothes as well.” A lot of pseudo-healers have appeared who have rushed to capitalise on people’s gullibility, fear, mistrust and superstition.

The social psychosis caused by the pandemic is not the first. The Spanish influenza that raged 100 years ago killed 5 per cent of the world’s population. Then there was the social psychosis triggered by Millennium expectations, which were linked to the coming end of the world a computer virus that would shut down the internet, and even a full-blown technological catastrophe.

Andrei Milehin, the head of the Romir Research Holding and vice president of the Gallup International, a global sociological service, emphasizes that the subject of epidemics must be discussed carefully: humanity has survived several pandemics. Fear of plague, cholera, unknown bacilli and viruses flows in our veins, and when this fear breaks out, human consciousness shrinks, it becomes both docile and aggressive. “So we have to be extremely careful in terms of communications, recommendations, expert opinions and medical statistics”². According to A. Milehin, what we know today is totally inadequate to the reaction raging in the media and the reaction shown by some politicians (not only and not so much in Russia).

¹ Горевой А. Версия. 23–29.04.2020. С. 6–7. [Gorevoi A. Versiya]

² Милехин А. О росте социальных психозов в эпоху Путина // Аргументы недели. 2020. 25–31 марта. С. 1 [Milehin A. On the rise of social psychosis during the Putin era].

Looking at official statistics (first of all the statistics of the World Health Organization), it is possible to notice that the number of the registered deaths from Covid-19 in Russia is insignificant in comparison with other diseases (in the world 3,500 people daily get smashed up in a road accident; about 55% of all people on the Earth die of cardiovascular diseases, and it is one thousand times more serious threat, than Covid-19 which has caused social psychosis 2020).

Therefore, what happened in our country, says A. Milehin, cannot even be called absurd: “We have many times more died of induced heart attacks and strokes as a result of this inadequate clamour and severe intimidation. This is a new reality that we don’t fully understand”¹.

The new reality transforms events into a kind of information vortex, an infodemic that has not yet been learned to manage.

If we look at the figures from Gallup International, we can see that people have no idea what to expect in the coming month or even week. 36% believe that the worst is yet to come, an equal number believe that the peak of negativity is over, and 27% think that the situation will remain the same for a long time. The greatest pessimists are in Great Britain (82% believe the worst is yet to come), the Netherlands (77%), France (70%) and Austria (68%). Much more optimistic are the residents of Kazakhstan (73% of them believe the worst is over), Turkey (63%), Armenia (61%), India (61%).

4. Components of social psychosis and culpability of authorities in their cultivation

Social psychosis caused by the pandemic has medical, social, and political and economic components. The fear of global pandemics runs deep in humanity. Especially when one sees that Russia has the largest border in the world, most of it in China and a large part in Europe. In addition, those are the two largest pandemic hotspots. The fact that there have been virtually no casualties from Covid-19 in Russia demonstrates the effectiveness of the measures taken. We should also take into account that despite temporary (for the period of quarantine) blocking of social cards of the pensioners (for their own good, so they would not travel by public transport and get infected), 65 thousand Moscow pensioners on 28.03.2020, the first quarantine day, tried to use their social cards. People have no fear, no common sense, and no civic responsibility; despite the fact, the statistics of other countries are terrible. In Italy, corpses are burnt, relatives cannot say goodbye to the dead; in New York, and refrigerator trucks are adapted to morgues.

¹ Милёхин А. О росте социальных психозов в эпоху Путина // Аргументы недели. 2020. 25–31 марта. С. 3 [Milehin A. On the rise of social psychosis during the Putin era].

Even Sergei Sobyenin, the mayor of Moscow, has spoken out about the Moscow residents' abusive failure to comply with the regime of self-isolation, calling Moscow residents to civic responsibility.

According to Gallup International, a global polling service, a majority of the world's residents are alarmed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but consider the threat exaggerated. At the same time, most people agree on personal restrictions. This means that the priority of personal freedoms in the minds of the advanced part of the population has not stood the test of fear. It is essentially the end of liberal philosophy. Moreover, it is also the end of European globalism, when the so-called EU gathering did not help the Italians, saying that they might not have enough masks and breathing apparatuses.

The question arises as to whether the most reasonable people think the threat of the pandemic is exaggerated, why are panic and mass social psychosis there? To answer these questions we must look deeper and read Sigmund Freud, who described panic as a mass government under hypnosis. Great Russian scientists Vladimir Bekhterev, Natalia Bekhtereva wrote about it, who described mass phenomena and examples of how a large and badly structured crowd or social group simultaneously loses its common sense, criticality, and begins to behave like a herd of animals. The way people behave under the conditions of Covid-19 testifies to a certain paradox, the lack of information in the presence of an abundance of it. Objective and authoritative information is drowning in a sea of fakes, lies and delusions.

Public opinion itself is a bizarre mixture of truth and error. But in the modern era, the boundaries between them are blurred and truth has lost its clarity. Hence, there is very little trust, above all little trust in the authorities. The credibility of information is also being eroded by the pandemic, as the authorities themselves are frightened and are losing their grip on reality. Against this background the act of V. V. Putin visiting an infectious disease. Putin's visit to Kommunarka infectious diseases hospital, where Covid-19 patients are kept, is unique as it is intended to demonstrate to the people the calmness and confidence of the authorities. In fact, people often stop believing the authorities when even statistics lie, because, firstly, in all countries the percentage of cases and mortality rates are measured according to different methods, and secondly, even in calm times the statistics are distorted by political aims of specific authorities, not to mention the pandemic when the authorities' actions are close to wartime hostilities. By the way, loudspeakers have been placed in some Russian cities, and the governor in Levitan's voice urges people to observe the quarantine and not to leave their homes.

The Romir report shows that the greatest satisfaction with the response of the authorities was expressed by the residents of Austria (88%), India (84%), Palestine (80%), the Netherlands (79%), Italy (72%) and the Philippines (70%). Not satisfied

with their government in Thailand 76%, USA 46%, Germany 44%. In Russia, 49% are satisfied with the actions of the authorities and 36% are not (Milehin 2020).

Two factors are important for understanding the features of social psychosis in the conditions of Covid-19: 1) the emergence of a new social stratum, fixated on consumer psychology and quality of life (in philosophy there even appeared an entire direction called “quality of life”); 2) the globalization of information.

In the second half of the 20th century, a huge part of the world’s population (let it be the notorious “golden billion”) has passed a certain threshold, and not just survived the end of wars and world upheavals, the necessity of survival (and the ability to enjoy the basic things of life), but for the first time in human history they wanted to live “well”, “qualitatively”. In America, this was the so-called baby boomers’ time, in our country the children of the thaw period, later the gilded youth. “To live well” phrase became a new challenge and concept. This was especially reflected in the metamorphosis of Russian psychology, for which the main question was not ‘how’ but ‘why’. And when people had a lot of free time, and the ideology of collectivism gave way to the ideology of individualism, a mass consumer society emerged. The ideology of liberalism mirrored this new reality. Paradoxically, the most aggressive critics of the ideology of collectivism, Marxism-Leninism in general, and of all Soviet values were, above all, children from elite families and the rushing to power of the intelligentsia. In September 1992, the professor and lawyer G. being a witness for Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, in the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation in the so-called CPSU case against the CPSU, admitted himself that in Soviet times he travelled half the world. And vice versa, V. O. Luchin who was the judge-rapporteur on the CPSU case, eventually wrote an Opinion, more loyal to the CPSU than the Decision of Constitutional Court of Russian Federation on this case. Meanwhile, in 1968, V. O. Luchin, a young lecturer at Voronezh government University, was threatened with expulsion from the party and almost lost his teaching job for having denounced the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet tanks (he was saved from a career collapse by his professor V. S. Osnovin). Incidentally, Alexander Yakovlev, who was the member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee, was awarded the Order of Friendship of Peoples for the Czechoslovak events of 1968. It was he who provided the ideological propaganda outlet of Mikhail Gorbachev, the first critic of Soviet power and the banner of liberalism during perestroika. It was he who symbolised the ideology of the takeover¹.

¹ Боброва Н. А. Конституционный строй и конституционализм в России. М., 2003. 263 с. [Bobrova N. A. The constitutional system and constitutionalism in Russia].

5. Infodemic as a social phenomenon of modern times

The second factor is related to the information explosion. Before the Internet and the omnipotence of the World Wide Web, the time it took for a joke to travel from Moscow to Khabarovsk was two weeks (the time it took for a train to travel on that route). Since around the 2000, there has been a worldwide globalization of information. In this sense, such terms as sovereignty and government border became public. The first social psychosis of the new times dates back to 1999, and was portrayed in the film “End of Days” with Arnold Schwarzenegger (when Satan was about to come to the earth by the chimes in New York’s main square on the night of 2000). The film looked very believable, people were afraid that everything would stop, trains would stop, planes and would crash, computers and we would reset to zero. As a result, committees were set up at government level to meet the year 2000, and it turned out to be a form of theft of budget money that had been earmarked for the relevant prevention programmes. This dent people’s hopes for the competence and purity of the authorities’ intentions too.

This was the “first shot”, the world went crazy over numbers! In the pandemic, the same thing is done in the information space, and the pandemic is accompanied by an equally terrifying phenomenon called infodemic. The space is being stirred up in a wave-like progression at the level of SMS, and there are no borders and social regulators, ethical stoppers are missing, consciousness in the world wide web is being shut down. We are waiting almost for a Messiah or no longer waiting for anything, finding ourselves in an ocean of information and a psychological stupor.

Infodemic starts to play the role of a kind of terrorism, since the meaning of a terrorist act is to create panic and social resonance from it. In a sense, the pandemic even supersedes acts of terrorism for the period of its omnipotence, because infodemic during pandemic is even more terrible than ordinary terrorism.

The pandemic and infodemic bring down entire industries and services, service enterprises, and the huge sector of small and medium-sized businesses. The pandemic and the infodemic seem to be rolling in on the well-being of families.

People are drowning in oceans of information, unable to discover the elusive “raft” of truth, even a “sliver” of truth, and the search for truth and the disputes often splinter families and former social communities in different directions. People cease to understand what in the surrounding sea of restrictions is real necessity and what is manipulation. Differing views of these life issues become “dry brushwood” capable of igniting at the slightest match. Moreover this “brushwood” is initially created in the form of a western-inspired educational system, for example, in Hong Kong textbooks were written not according to Chinese, but Western molds, which predetermined the political outbreak in 2020.

Sociological data from Romir indicate that people are willing to temporarily sacrifice some rights and freedoms if doing so would help prevent contagion: 35% Strongly Agree, 41% Rather Agree, 12% Rather Disagree and 6% Reject this prospect. In total, more than three quarters (76%) of the countries surveyed are prepared to sacrifice some freedom until the epidemiological threat has disappeared. The highest levels of readiness were in Austria (95%), Macedonia (94%) and the Netherlands (91%). In Russia, 60% are prepared to sacrifice some rights, while 28% are not¹.

The survey was conducted in Russia and 25 other countries. The numbers are significant. Some kind of panic is evident. There was a very important question: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: in this critical situation, do I trust the actions of the authorities of my country?" Residents of cities with a population of more than 100 thousand people answered. 12% completely agree and believe that the government is handling the situation well. 37% agree. In other words, about half of citizens highly appreciate actions of the government. However, 22% disagree and 14% completely disagree. It turns out that more than 1/3 treats government actions negatively. The rest of them found it difficult to answer. The figures suggest that governability is not lost. People are waiting for further considered steps; they trust the authorities and do not expect another savior in a difficult situation. Even the church is urging obedience to the authorities' call to stay at home. On March 28, 2020, central TV channels broadcast a sermon dated March 26 by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia calling his flock to pray at home.

18% responded to the "Is the threat of the coronavirus exaggerated?" question that they completely agree with it, while 36% generally agreed. Thus, 54% of Russians living in urban areas believe that the threat is exaggerated or greatly exaggerated.

6. Limitations on freedom of movement during pandemic

The authorities are responsible for public health and for preventing the spread of the epidemic. For this reason, the authorities are obliged to restrict certain constitutional rights of citizens, in particular the right to freedom of movement. The legal basis for restrictive measures is the provisions of Article 35(3) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation: "Human and civil rights and freedoms may be restricted by federal law only to the extent necessary to protect the foundations of the constitutional order, morality, health, rights and lawful interests of others, to ensure the defence of the country and the security of the state".

¹ Милёхин А. Указ. соч. [Milehin A.].

President V. V. Putin gave regional leaders the opportunity to take measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, including restricting freedom of movement. On March 5th, S. Sobyenin, the mayor of Moscow approved the decree "On introduction of the high alert regime"¹. On March 20th, this regime was imposed in all the regions of Russia: the ban on the mass events, suspension of retail objects (except the food, medicines and essentials), transition to the distance education, etc. Although V. V. Putin warned against fanaticism in this matter, some heads of regions have established a strict regulation. For example, the governor of the Amur Region has introduced a regime of self-isolation at the place of permanent or temporary residence for 14 days for persons arriving from other regions².

But is there a legal basis for introducing such measures? Does it not violate the constitutional right to freedom of movement?

In fact, the different measures taken by heads of regions in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic add to scholars' thesis that the Russian Federation is asymmetric, with the combination of factors influencing the asymmetry of the Federation "being selective, as there are no criteria for their selection"³.

The Decree of the Mayor of Moscow was adopted in accordance with Article 6 of the Federal Law № 58-FZ of 21.12.1994 On protection of population and territories against natural and technological disasters⁴. According to Articles 1 and 4.1 of the Act the high readiness mode is one of the modes of operation of the authorities and unified government system for prevention and liquidation of emergency situations. Imposing such a regime there might be: a) the access of people and vehicles may be restricted to the territory where there is a threat of an emergency, as well as to the emergency zone; b) the activities of an organization that is in the emergency zone may be suspended if there is a threat to the life safety of its employees and other citizens located on its territory.

¹ Указ мэра Москвы от 05.03.2020 № 12-УМ «О введении режима повышенной готовности» [Decree of the Mayor of Moscow].

² Распоряжение Губернатора Амурской области от 01.04.2020 № 44-р «О внесении изменения в распоряжение губернатора Амурской области от 27.01.2020 № 10-р» [Amur Region governor order dated 01.04.2020 No. 44-p On amendments to the Order of the Governor of the Amur Region dated 27.01.2020 No. 10-p].

³ Малай А. Ф. О равноправии субъектов Российской Федерации и критериях его проявления // Конституционное и муниципальное право. 2019. № 7. С. 54. [Maly A. F. On the equality of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and the criteria for its manifestation].

⁴ Федеральный закон от 21.12.1994 № 58-ФЗ «О защите населения и территорий от чрезвычайных явлений природного и техногенного характера» (с изм. и доп. от 01.06.2020 № 98-ФЗ) // Собрание законодательства. 1994. № 35. Ст. 3548 [Federal Law of 21.12.1994 No. 58-FZ On protection of population and territories from natural and technological emergencies].

The official in the course of the introduction of the government of high alert has the right to implement measures necessitated by the development of an emergency situation that do not restrict the rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen.

The Decree of the Mayor of Moscow restricts a person's right to mobility by obligating them not to leave their place of residence (with certain exceptions) except for travelling to the nearest place of purchase of goods and services whose sale is not restricted, walking pets within 100 m of their place of residence, taking out waste to the nearest place of waste accumulation¹. However, the reference to "a" subparagraph of paragraph 10 of Article 4.1 of FL-58 seems to be not very good to justify the imposition of said restrictions. Such point of view is held, for example, by S. A. Dronova². According to the meaning of the provision of the law it is obvious that the territory where there is a threat of emergency should be definite and not become so depending on any grounds, in this case it is depending on remoteness from the place of residence (stay).

On 30.03.2020 the Moscow City Court recorded the first claim for declaring the provisions of the Moscow Mayor's Decree on self-isolation invalid and unenforceable. The claimant believes that the mayor of Moscow had no grounds and authority to take measures restricting the constitutional right to freedom of movement. This could only be done by imposing: quarantine, government of emergency, martial law.

The imposition of quarantine would have been applicable to the situation in question, but the quarantine was not imposed for certain reasons. Law No. 58-FZ did not provide for measures against communicable diseases at the time of the suit. However, it was amended on 01.04.2020 and from that moment on the situation in a certain area, including the spread of a disease that is dangerous to the public, was classified as an emergency.

Since then, the Moscow Mayor's Decree complies with the provisions of Law No. 52-FZ. The provisions of the said law established various restrictive measures during the quarantine period: medical, veterinary, administrative and other measures aimed at preventing infectious diseases and providing for a special regime of activities (economic, cultural, educational, etc.) as well as restrictions on the movement of people, vehicles, cargo, goods and animals.

¹ Указ мэра Москвы от 02.04.2020 № 36-УМ «О внесении изменений в Указ мэра Москвы от 5 марта 2020 г. № 12-УМ» [Decree of the Mayor of Moscow of 02.04.2020 No. 36-UM On Amendments to Decree of the Mayor of Moscow dated March 5, 2020 г. No. 12-UM]

² Дронова С.А. Ограничение конституционных прав в условиях эпидемиологических потрясений // Конституционное и муниципальное право. 2020. № 6. С. 74. [Dronova S. A. Constitutional rights restriction during epidemiological shocks]

7. Conclusion

This is not the first economic crisis we have seen. The crises of 1998, 2008 and 2014 have been safely overcome. The crisis of 2020 will be overcome as well, although it is caused not only by an unprecedented fall in oil prices, but also by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Paradoxically, even with an extremely low assessment of the efficiency of Russian economic management, in a critical situation the Russian undivided authority rule allows to act effectively: the authorities, business, citizens and civil society as a whole have managed to master the situation and prevent panic. During pandemic situation, the authoritarian style of Russian governance shows its effectiveness against the failure of political leaders in many countries.

The paradox is that despite evidence that a significant percentage of the population considers the pandemic threat exaggerated an equally significant percentage of the population in pandemic and infodemic is seized by fear for their health and that of their loved ones. There is no direct correlation, and factors influencing the nature and extent of this correlation need to be investigated.

Alongside the pandemic, such entirely new phenomenon as infodemic is emerging in the era of globalised information. The consequences of infodemic are as significant as those of the pandemic. Power is often incapable of managing the situation under infodemic conditions, and is to some extent responsible for its magnitude. The controllability of social processes under infodemic conditions is radically altered than reduced, requiring special scientific developments.

The responsibility of the government and the public authorities during pandemic and infodemic is also being heavily modified: 1) rallies, strikes and other acts of economic character are postponed in time to unite all structures, employers and workers to fight against a common unforeseeable evil; 2) breaking out of the political acts of opposition to the national authorities, fuelled from outside; 3) authoritarian methods of power and administration, the role of controlling and supervising structures are reinforced; 4) responsibility is individualized (for example, on 30.03.2020, V. V. Putin asked his plenipotentiaries in the districts together with governors to ensure the fight against coronavirus); 5) after summing up the results of the pandemic and infodemic, personnel conclusions up to dismissal are possible; 6) restriction of constitutional rights during the pandemic must have an adequate legal basis; 7) legal grounds for limiting the constitutional right to freedom of movement deserve special attention.

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