

## Artículo de investigación

**Corruption as a global threat to sustainable development: a view from Russia****Коррупция – глобальная угроза устойчивого развития: взгляд из России**

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**Abstract**

The goal of the article is to identify factors that turn corruption into the main threat to sustainable development of the modern society. As a result of the study, the mechanism of the reproduction of modern corruption practices in various countries has been revealed, the reasons for the inefficiency of the anti-corruption policy have been detected, and the areas of further research in this area have been identified. The specifics of the corruption reproduction mechanism in the modern Russia have been identified in the context of global trends in corruption manifestations, an analysis of the corruption practices dynamics has been provided, and suggestions and recommendations for improving the mechanism for combating corruption have been formulated. The key conclusion is that the main factor in the corruption reproduction mechanism in Russia is ambivalence of consciousness as a form of corruption perception, which combines its rejection and moral justification as follows: "corruption is immoral but yet acceptable in a consumer society where everyone solves problems as they can".

**Key words:** Corruption, sustainable development, democracy, corruption practices, corruption perception index, corruption risks, anti-corruption policy.

**Аннотация**

Цель работы состоит в выявлении факторов, превращающих коррупцию в главную угрозу устойчивого развития современного общества. В результате исследования раскрыт механизм воспроизводства современных коррупционных практик в разных странах, выявлены причины неэффективности антикоррупционной политики, определены направления дальнейших научных изысканий в этой сфере.

В контексте мировых трендов коррупционных проявлений выявлена специфика механизма воспроизводства коррупции в современной России, дан анализ динамики коррупционных практик, сформулированы предложения и рекомендации по совершенствованию механизма противодействия коррупции. Основной вывод состоит в том, что главный фактор в механизме воспроизводства коррупции в России - амбивалентность сознания как форма мировосприятия коррупции, одновременно сочетающая неприятие и моральное оправдание ее по принципу: "коррупция аморальна, но вполне допустима в обществе потребления, где каждый решает свои проблемы, как умеет".

**Ключевые слова:** коррупция, устойчивое развитие, демократия, коррупционные практики, индекс восприятия коррупции, коррупционные риски, политика противодействия коррупции.

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## Introduction

The Latin term "corrumpere" ("spoil", "upset affairs", "squander a fortune", "bribe someone") emerged in the 8th century BC in ancient Rome to designate social relations based on the bribery of officials and their use of public authority for personal gain. The once powerful and prosperous Roman Empire became the victim of corruption, which slowly devoured this state like a kraken. However, the practice of misuse of power by officials and judges for mercenary purposes arose much earlier, with the emergence of the first states of the Ancient East in the 4th millennium BC. It seemed that corruption was so old that it had to "die quietly" under the burden of time. However, corruption still exists today in almost any country, either developed or undeveloped. The modern meaning of the term "corruption" has long gone beyond its original meaning. Corruption today is a form of criminal practice that has become pandemic. Politicians, businessmen, many civil servants, entrepreneurs, and ordinary people resort to corruption deals.

The relevance of the topic is determined by the search for the causes of high adaptability and widespread corruption practices in the world and the modern Russia. Despite the obvious destructive impact of corruption on various sectors of society, the international organization Transparency International notes the lack of progress in combating corruption in most countries of the world in 2018 due to the weak implementation of efficient measures to establish significant control over it. According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) assigned to various countries by the international anti-corruption organization Transparency International, more than two-thirds of all countries scored below 50 (out of 100) in 2018, while the average score was just 43. Only 20 countries have significantly improved their rankings since 2012, including Estonia and Côte d'Ivoire. At the same time, 16 countries significantly reduced the ranking, including Australia, Malta, and Chile. Denmark (88 points) and New Zealand (87 points) are on the top of the CPI. The closing positions in the ranking are occupied by South Sudan, Syria (13 points each), and Somalia (10 points). The regions with the highest score are Western Europe and the European Union with an average score of 66, while the regions with the lowest rating are Africa (average score 32), Eastern Europe, and Central Asia (average score 35) (electronic resource).

Despite the anti-corruption measures taken by the government, Russia remains a country with a high level of corruption characteristic of third world countries. Russia's score in the Transparency International ranking remained unchanged in 2013 – 2017 and was 29 out of 100. According to it, Russia ranked 135th out of 180. Russia scored 28 out of 100 in 2018 and ranked 138th out of 180. Papua New Guinea, Lebanon, Guinea, Mexico, and Iran scored the same (Engels, 2014). Unfortunately, corruption has hit many areas of the relationship between the state and society over a quarter of a century of the democratic development of the modern Russia, turning into the main setback to bringing the country onto the path of sustainable development. Practice reveals that corruption has become the main obstacle to the implementation of the "breakthrough strategy" by the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin, which consists of 13 national projects. The main goal of the "breakthrough strategy" is an individual, their health and high living standards. This goal cannot be achieved without eliminating the technological backwardness of Russia, creating a favorable human environment and an efficient government that implements an ambitious reform program.

It seems illogical that the growth of corruption-related crimes in the modern Russia continues when all the prerequisites for successful corruption control are established in the country: there is an advanced anti-corruption legislation and a logically structured system of institutions designed to prevent and detect corruption offenses. The regime of Western sanctions imposed against Russia since 2014 does not curb the growth of corruption crimes either. It seemed that this circumstance was supposed to make the red tape and the political elite become nation-focused, seek for internal resources, strengthen discipline and control over resources, their fair and targeted distribution. This was partly realized: the import substitution regime promoted the development of agriculture and industry. However, the sanction regime did not have a mobilizing effect on the consciousness of the ruling elite and the population and did not curb the emergence of new corrupt practices, while retaining a large amount of traditional forms of corruption. Russia faced the following choice today: "Either go beyond the boundaries of history and create a prosperous democratic state, or suffer the same unfortunate fate as corrupt Rome had".

Research hypothesis: The ambivalence of perception and attitude to corruption in society, both among the ruling elite and general public, is the key factor in the reproduction of corruption in Russia – along with economic inequality, total poverty of the population, and cultural practices of "gifting, patronage, and offerings". The ambivalence of consciousness means a form of perception of corruption where diametrically opposite ideas about its nature, forms, and consequences combine. The ambivalence of consciousness leads to the emergence of double standards in assessing the nature and consequences of corruption and moral justification of corrupt behavior as a way to achieve individual goals.

### Methods

Corruption as a system of informal communications based on bribery of officials, nepotism, gratitude, and patronage causes disappointment by state institutions and the government as a whole and leads to exacerbation of violence and instability. As cited in the preamble to the UN Convention against Corruption, adopted by General Assembly resolution 58/4 of 31 October 2003, the destructive effect of corruption is that it is "undermines the institutions and values of democracy, ethical values and justice and jeopardizes sustainable development and the rule of law" (United Nations, n.d.).

Investigation of such a complex phenomenon as corruption, the manifestations of which are mainly latent in nature, requires a multiparadigm approach that includes a set of both general cognitive principles and applied methods (observation, interviews, surveys, analysis of statistics, etc.). The multiplication of methods borrowed from various sectors of science, coupled with the use of comparative analysis strategies, allows to more accurately describe the nature, causes, and forms of corrupt practices in the 21st century in various countries.

It must be noted that corruption is not a phantom or mysticism, but rather a fact of social reality in the form of an event, a relationship, or an institution. As a social phenomenon, corruption arises in society and is a form of communication (mostly latent) between people who pursue their daily interests and seek personal gain using their power and official position. In contrast to legitimate practices, the relationship of dependency (patron – client) that underlies corruption forms a latent social reality with "its own rules" for decision-making and distribution of the "public good". As social relations, corruption is stable relationships, where the

subjects are people with their intentions, thoughts, feelings, actions, and relationships, while objects are resources, statuses, reputations, and positions – the matter of their interaction. By redistributing material wealth and other values in favor of a small group, corruption violates the principle of justice and the formal equality of fundamental rights and freedoms of an individual and a citizen, and creates a threat to the constitutional order of society. As an informal social institution, corruption is a set of deviant norms and practices that establish sustainable models of people's behavior aimed at using the official, status, and imperious position through which people receive undeserved preferences (Abramov, Mukhaev, 2019). Corrupt practices are understood as a set of criminal habitualized acts of unlawful use by an official of their authority and official position in order to gain benefits in the form of money, valuables, and other property, as well as property rights for themselves or third parties.

As a set of deviant social practices, corruption is quite diverse and multifaceted. There are the following forms of corruption:

- 1) Corruption crimes (theft of material and financial resources abusing official position, giving a bribe, accepting a bribe, commercial bribery, etc.);
- 2) Administrative offenses (petty theft of material and monetary funds abusing an official position, misuse of budgetary funds and funds of extrabudgetary funds and other cases subject to administrative law);
- 3) Disciplinary offenses, i.e. abusing the status to obtain certain benefits for which disciplinary sanction is provided;
- 4) Prohibited civil law transactions (for example, accepting gifts or giving gifts, providing services to a public servant by third parties) (Abramov, Mukhaev, 2019).

### Results

What many refused to notice for a long time is obvious today: corruption is one of the main causes of the crisis of modern democracy throughout the world. According to Patricia Moreira, Managing Director of Transparency International, "With many democratic institutions under threat across the globe – often by leaders with authoritarian or populist tendencies – we need to do more to strengthen checks and balances and protect citizens' rights. Corruption chips away at democracy to produce

a vicious cycle, where corruption undermines democratic institutions and, in turn, weak institutions are less able to control corruption" (The Corruption Perception Index for 2018, 2019).

Corruption is opposed to democracy, it undermines and discredits its values, norms, and institutions, and creates a parallel social reality. In contrast, democracy is the most rational way of nonviolently coordinating the interests of various groups based on the primacy of individual and civil rights and freedoms, the rule of law, competition policy, and a mature party system. Democracy has many dimensions, and there are more than 500 definitions of this term in the modern science. J. Schumpeter's interpretation of democracy is considered one of the most universal definitions: "democracy is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter, 1947). Indeed, democracy today is not similar to "people's power", but rather represents the technology of gaining and exercising state power by a minority elected by the majority and acting on its behalf. An expanded interpretation of democracy is used for analytical purposes, which includes, along with the institution of competitive elections, a set of civil rights and freedoms required for competitiveness and participation in elections to make sense. The democracy is understood as liberal democracy (or the polyarchy of R. Dahl) with its political institutions: 1) election of power; 2) universal secret ballot; 3) free fair elections excluding fraud and violence; 4) dependence of political decision-making on the will of the voter; 5) freedom of the media; 6) availability of competitive sources of information; and 6) full autonomy of organizations and unions (Dahl, 1971).

Decreasing the efficiency of democratic institutions inevitably leads to an expansion of the scope of latent corruption practices that supplant legal social institutions and norms. This is a dangerous trend of underestimating the destructive role of corruption. The relationship between healthy democracy and the successful fight against corruption in the public sector is highlighted in the 2018 Transparency International report: "Corruption is much more likely to flourish where democratic foundations are weak, ... where undemocratic and populist politicians can use it to their advantage" (2018 Corruption Perception Index, 2019). Countries around the world are grouped by their level of democracy into four categories in the report: 1)

full democracies score 75 on average in the CPI; 2) the so-called "flawed democracies" score 49 on average; 3) hybrid regimes (which show elements of autocratic tendencies) score 35; and 4) authoritarian states score the least – just 30 in the CPI, on average.

For example, Hungary and Turkey have experienced a decline in both the health of their democracies and control of corruption, as the CPI ranking decreased there by 8 and 9 points, respectively, from 2013 to 2018. Meanwhile, Turkey moved from the category of "partially free" to the category of "nonfree" countries, and the lowest rate of political rights observance was recorded in Hungary since the fall of the communist system in 1989. The downgrade of both countries was manifested in the increasing noncompliance with the rule of law, in the deterioration of the activities of democratic institutions, and in the rapidly narrowing space for the activities of civil society institutions and independent media. In countries with a high level of corruption, there is a potential danger to the activities of the political opposition, whose leaders can be physically destroyed by the ruling regime.

However, the crisis of democratic norms and institutions is also experienced by countries that have always been referred to as "full democracies" – for example, the US. Compared to 2017, the US score fell by four points in 2018 to 71. This is the lowest US score on the CPI in seven years. The US did not enter the top 20 countries by the CPI for the first time in 2018. The downgrade coincided with the emergence of threats to the functioning of the system of checks and balances in the US, which manifested in the confrontation between Congress and President D. Trump and resulted in a series of political and corruption scandals that led to undermining ethical standards in the highest echelons of power.

It is obvious that corruption is an international phenomenon, and its prevalence in Russia is not a distinctive attribute of the country, as it may seem. However, another fact is also obvious: over the quarter century of the existence of the modern Russia, its anti-corruption policy has not been so effective because it failed to bring corruption under control. The authors believe that the ineffectiveness of the state anti-corruption policy of Russia is due to the failure to dismantle the mechanism for producing corrupt practices, while the fight against corruption has not become a systemic and everyday struggle involving not only government

bodies but the whole society. The mechanism of reproducing corruption in Russia is made up of the same factors as in any other country. Distinctive features include their combination, scale and scope of corruption, forms of corruption, nature of perception, and attitude of the population to corruption.

1. The institutional mechanism for reproducing corruption in Russia, as in any society, is the state administrative structure designed to fairly distribute "public goods": resources, rights, freedoms, and statuses. Indeed, any society needs to regulate and streamline the joint activities of people. For this purpose, a state is being established in society, designed to express and realize generally significant needs through administrative officials with regulatory and executive powers. Proceeding from this, the public sphere is the objective breeding ground for the emergence and growth of corrupt practices – the sphere of power relations designed to create universal rules and allocate resources by making managerial decisions. The institutional mechanism of the state executive regulation of public relations at all levels is represented by a hierarchy of officials who can exercise the power of authority granted to them at their discretion. In this case, the power is abused by the official. The statistics illustrate a growing trend of corruption offenses. According to the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation, 28,378 corruption offenses were detected in state and municipal institutions in 2017, 28,956 were detected in 2018, and 23,760 were detected in the six months of 2019. The growth of corruption offenses is also stable in organizations designed to fulfill the tasks assigned to federal state bodies: 2,263 such facts were revealed in 2017, 2,372 were revealed in 2018, and 1,152 were revealed over six months of 2019. In other organizations, 32,353 corruption offenses were revealed in 2017, 32,104 were revealed in 2018, and 20,440 were revealed over six months of 2019 (Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, n.d.). According to statistics from the Supreme Court, 36 % of all convicted of bribe cases in 2017 were state and municipal officials, 21 % were police officers, 12 % were businessmen, and 9

% were traffic police officers (Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, n.d.)

The specifics of Russia are power merging with property at all levels, because power is regarded as an effective way of personal enrichment. Therefore, the growth of corruption impact is caused by the large-scale capitalization of power – a situation in which politicians and officials have discretionary power (power to distribute resources that do not belong to them) and use it for personal gain. This trend has become a sign of the times. The broadest set of resources includes an administrative resource, which is in the hands of the government. It involves the use of the power resource of law enforcement agencies and special services to solve problems relevant to the ruling elite. Moreover, the government has a regulatory resource, which includes the right to issue bylaws and make managerial decisions in the interests of certain groups. The parliament possesses a legislative resource consisting in the development and adoption of laws in the interests of the ruling political and business elite. A financial resource includes funds from budgets of various levels of government, which may not be allocated for the needs of society, but reflect the requests of political parties and business groups. Massive cases of the power abuse in Russia at various levels of the power vertical are a consequence of the fact that the basic principle of the inevitability of punishment regardless of position, rank, or kinship is not systematically implemented. It must be noted that any corruption crime, regardless of the ranks and positions of the persons who committed them, is a crime against the state and its institutions, it discredits the entire system of power in the eyes of citizens and undermines the foundations of the constitutional system, law, and order.

2. The behavioral factor in the mechanism of reproducing corruption manifests in the rent-seeking behavior of Russian politicians and officials who seek to maximize their profits from the right to make managerial decisions (Rose-Ackerman, 2003). The right to vary one's decision at their own discretion in an atypical situation in Russia is associated with the low quality of the political and administrative elite, its greed, corruption, and selfishness. Often people who come to power pursue selfish interests of personal enrichment. They understand that "investing in power" is the most reliable and profitable investment, which not

just quickly pays off, but also gives guarantees of personal integrity. Investment in power has become one of the main problems that most of the developed and developing countries of the world, including Russia, are facing today. It is no coincidence that persons with special legal status most often become involved in corruption cases in Russia. According to the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation A. Bastrykin, almost 80 thousand criminal cases of corruption were filed to the court from 2011 to 2019. Investigators brought 5,038 persons with special legal status as defendants in criminal cases filed to court on corruption-related crimes. They included over three thousand deputies of local authorities and elected heads of municipalities of local governments, 94 deputies of the legislative bodies of the regions of the Russian Federation, 35 judges, 119 prosecutors, 516 lawyers, and 604 investigators of various departments, of which 122 were from the Investigative Committee (n.d.). Based on this, the urgent demand of the time is to prepare and join the nation-focused political and administrative elite of Russia. This requires legal social elite recruitment elevators instead of the privatization of power by the children of current politicians.

3. Low efficiency of state anti-corruption policies and anti-corruption measures. It must be fairly noted that the topic of corruption is on the agenda of the ruling elite. An understanding of the importance of solving this problem is laid out in the "National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2018 – 2020" approved by the Decree of President V. Putin dated June 29, 2018 "On the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2018 – 2020." This is the third national plan. Public organizations and experts took part in its formation. The specifics of the National Plan are that it is adopted for three years, while previous plans were adopted for two years. The short terms were explained by the need for active formation of the anti-corruption legislation, which was successfully resolved: a large number of laws were adopted, and many changes affected the procedures. The third National Plan is

based on a more balanced approach, taking the domestic experience of anti-corruption struggle into account.

The accumulated experience in combating corruption in recent years has yielded in resonant arrests and sentences of large officials accused of bribery at the federal and regional levels. The amount of detected bribes became an illustration of the active operation of law enforcement agencies. The total amount of bribes received in Russia amounted to 2.3 bln rubles in 2016, but it then tripled in 2017 and amounted to 6.7 bln rubles. These are the amounts that could be detected in criminal cases under Article 290 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (accepting a bribe). However, the statistics on bribes varies depending on the department. The National Anti-Corruption Committee of Russia separately assessed the amount of bribes that had been offered in 2017 by Russian citizens (giving a bribe – Article 211 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) – it had amounted to 4.5 bln rubles. The amount of detected bribes amounted to 946.8 mln rubles in 2016. As such, compared with 2016, the total amount of bribery in 2017 increased four times, according to detected facts. It must be noted that half of the detected corruption crimes is petty bribery. The term "petty bribery" was introduced in the Criminal Code in 2016 and describes bribes of less than 10 thous. rubles. The shortest sentence for petty bribery is two years in prison. However, the punishment may be increased to four years, if a person has a criminal record under a corruption article. The amount of detected bribes does not describe the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, since the front of the fight against corruption has moved from the lowest level (teachers, doctors) to the middle and highest levels: against senior officials, where the level of offerings is times higher. Therefore, the amount of 6.7 bln rubles does not reflect the real situation in the fight against corruption. This is the "tip of the iceberg", and the increase in the volume of detected bribes is due to several high-profile criminal cases against large officials. The examples are the amount of 9 bln rubles that was found in the home of the former MIA colonel D. Zakharchenko, or the arrest of the head of the K banking department of the FSB Economic Security Service, colonel K. Cherkalin and his colleagues, from whom 12 bln rubles were seized during the search.

Combating corruption as "campaigns" or selective reactions of the authorities to publications in the media has generated a steady disbelief of the population in the success of the

fight against corruption at the state level. The All-Russian Public Opinion Assessment Center (VTsIOM) published the results of a monitoring study on the level of corruption in society in 2018. The opinion of Russians about high-profile corruption cases is interesting: 47 % think that these are just demonstration actions or settling accounts, and only 42 % perceive them as evidence of real anti-corruption measures (All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion, n.d.). As before, people prefer to hush up the corruption cases and solve their problems through it. VTsIOM monitoring studies for the period 2016 – 2018 allowed to rank the most corrupt areas: according to the respondents' estimates, the first place is traditionally taken by medicine (23 %), the traffic police and the police (16 %), the housing and utilities sector (16 %), and the judiciary and the prosecutor's office (14 %).

4. A loyal and complacent attitude of the majority of the population towards corruption is the mental factor of the mechanism of reproducing corruption in Russia. The ambivalent consciousness of society (from the elite to the general public) is the result of the transition process from administrative socialism to the market and democracy. The ambivalence of consciousness as a form of perception of corruption combines the polar notions of nature and its consequences in the community: "corruption is immoral but yet acceptable in a consumer society where everyone solves problems as they can." Unlike many developed countries, the ruling elite and ordinary citizens of Russia have not recognized the fact that corruption is a global disease that affected not only the system of state and municipal government, but also many areas of everyday life, over a quarter century of democratic development.

Moreover, the establishment of zero tolerance for corruption has not yet been formed in Russian society and has not become a habit of effectively counteracting it. This is evidenced by data from a study of the attitude of the population towards corruption conducted by the Levada Center from 2003 to 2018. The peak of concern for Russians about the level of corruption peaked in 2018 and amounted to 38 % of respondents who called this problem the most acute, while the rest did not consider it as such. In terms of significance, corruption ranked third in the list of urgent problems (ANO Levada Center, n.d.).

5. Dominance of simplified notions of the nature of corruption and its destructive role and consequences for the individual and society in the consciousness of the general public is the information factor of the mechanism of reproducing corruption. This is partly due to the fact that corruption as a social phenomenon is mainly latent: most corruption manifestations are hidden from official records. Along with the obvious characteristics of corruption relations, corruption reflects deeper corrosion processes of the economic and political system and public morality that are not directly observed.

It must be noted that the legal definition of corruption provided in Article 1 of the Federal Law "On Combating Corruption" dated December 25, 2008 No. 273-FZ discloses the essence of corruption-related crimes. According to it, corruption is "abusing official position, giving a bribe, accepting a bribe, abusing authority, commercial bribery or other illegal use by an individual of their official position contrary to the legitimate interests of society and the state in order to obtain benefits in the form of money, valuables, other property <...>, other property rights for themselves or for third parties <...>, as well as committing these acts on behalf of or in the interests of a legal entity".

The population usually learns about the manifestations and the level of corruption in the country through the media: television or print media, and social networks become especially popular today with the widest target audience. Basically, public attitudes towards corruption are formed under the influence of the media. In the media market, the topic of corruption is the best "selling": against the background of low living standard, it distracts the population from everyday problems and serves as a "channel" for social indignation. The media form an everyday picture of corruption by covering various cases of corruption (bribes, malpractice, fraud), which identifies corruption with bribery and fraud. However, it cannot be denied that the investigating authorities of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation most often initiate criminal cases under the influence of the media.

Corruption is perceived by the general public utterly simplified as a two-way process of paid exchange, where the client gives, and the patron takes – one asks for the service, and the other agrees to provide it. Focusing on the process of

transferring something or agreeing with something obscures the meaning of corruption. However, the essence of corruption is in obtaining preferences (benefits): in economic relations, politics, and public administration. It must be noted that the whole variety of corruption manifestations is often reduced to bribery at the expert level as well. Moreover, there has been a massive habitualization of corrupt practices as an informal social institution in Russian society. Data from the General Prosecutor of the Russian Federation from August 28, 2018 allow to judge the frequency and amount of giving a bribe and accepting a bribe by Russian citizens: 4,176 bribes were given in January – June 2016, 1,347 bribes – in January – June 2017, and 1,389 bribes – in January – June 2018; 5,027 bribes were accepted in January – June 2016, 2,015 bribes – in January – June 2017, and 2,242 bribes – in January – June 2018. The number of cases of accepting a bribe increased by 10 % in 2018. There were 1.5 registered cases of accepting a bribe (Article 290 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) and 0.9 cases of giving a bribe (Article 291 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) in the first half of 2018 for every 100 thous. Russians. As such, there are 24 people convicted of involvement in bribes for every million citizens of Russia: 15 who accepted and 9 who gave (Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, n.d.).

As such, it can be argued that corruption in Russia has become a threat to national security, creating a direct and indirect possibility of harming national interests. National security is understood as "the state of security of an individual, society, and state from internal and external threats, which ensures the implementation of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens of the Russian Federation (...), decent living standards, sovereignty, independence, state and territorial integrity, and sustainable socioeconomic development of the Russian Federation" ([www.consultant.ru](http://www.consultant.ru). Electronic resource). The system of bribing officials deforms Russia's national interests, which are designed to reflect the objectively significant needs of the individual, society, and the state in ensuring their security and sustainable development. Instead, managerial decisions made at different levels of government often reflect the vested interests of officials, politicians, and business groups.

The marketization of various areas of the modern Russian society has brought new forms of corrupt practices to life. A classic bribe is already

considered archaic today. Corruption has taken the form of offshore transactions and operations with cryptocurrencies, conflicts of interest and employment of relatives in profitable commercial structures. New corruption-intensive schemes and practices include the following: receipt of funds in the budget and their management, corruption transactions with state orders and with the tender system as a whole, withdrawal of funds through state-owned companies abroad to offshore, extremely high degree of corruption risk in road construction, and housing and utility services. Besides, forms of political corruption have become widespread with the use of official positions by deputies of the State Duma, members of the Federation Council, regional deputies, and heads of regions and municipalities.

On the one hand, the low effectiveness of measures taken by government bodies to combat corruption is an important factor in the spread of new forms of corruption practices. Corruptionists use the achievements of the information technology revolution and are one step ahead. On the other hand, decrease in the level of civic engagement of the population and the low involvement of citizens in the fight against corruption are a factor in the spread of corruption-related crimes. The atomized Russian society consists of a small number of rich citizens and a mass of poor, who agree on one point: they are all equally inspired by the idea of "limitless" consumption. However, each of them realizes the dream of a "better life" as they can. As before, people do not believe in the fight against corruption at the state level, since they are involved in corruption schemes through which they "solve" their problems themselves. A similar predisposition to solve the problem through bribery creates favorable conditions for the growth of corruption practices and increases the size of bribes.

The new forms of corruption that have become significant include the misuse of budget funds. One of the reasons contributing to the spread of this type of corrupt practices is partly due to gaps in the mechanism of their legal regulation, including the lack of qualifying elements of an act. The annual report of the Accounts Chamber for 2017 contains information on the submission of proposals to the General Prosecutor's Office on the establishment of clear criteria for classifying the facts of budget expenditures as misuse. The following example can be provided. The report of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation for 2017 contains information on the provision of a subsidy of



69.84 mln rubles to Niarmedik Pharma LLC for the "Creation of a site for the synthesis of a pharmaceutical substance and a finished dosage form of the Kagocel drug" and the "Creation of a site for the synthesis of a pharmaceutical substance of a drug PBTZ169." It must be noted that the State Register of Medicines already contained information on the registration of the pharmaceutical substance "Kagocel" dated August 13, 2007 (registry entry number R No. 001042/01) by the manufacturer of Niarmedic Plus LLC, which, according to the SPARK Interfax information system, is the parent company (founder) of Niarmedic Pharma LLC by the period of the subsidy (electronic resource). The fact that the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Russia provided a subsidy to Niarmedic Pharma LLC for the creation of a pharmaceutical substance that has already been developed and included in the State Register of Medicines can be qualified as a form of corruption practice.

The misuse of budget funds is a form of abusing power and refers to public corruption crimes. In this regard, the following amendments to Clause 1 of Article 285 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation "Inappropriate spending of budgetary funds" can be proposed: "Spending budgetary funds by an official of the recipient of budgetary funds for purposes that do not meet the conditions for their receipt, as determined by the approved budget, budget list, notification of budgetary appropriations, estimates of income and expenses, or other document that serves as the basis for receipt of budgetary funds committed on a large scale individually or by a group of persons using their official position shall be punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term of three to five years with deprivation of right to hold specific posts or be engaged in certain activities. In this regard, the expenditure of budget funds in a large amount should be considered as damage of more than one million rubles." The exclusion of measures of administrative responsibility for misuse of budget funds from the article and a reduction in the damage threshold value to one million rubles will significantly increase the effectiveness of the anti-corruption system in Russia. In addition, it can also become a prerequisite for applying criminal liability measures exclusively to all types of corruption-related crimes.

A significant number of corruption-related crimes are committed in the state and municipal procurements, which have become fertile ground for all kinds of abuses. Corrupt officials use various schemes to conceal the unlawful influence on the conclusion of contracts within

their competence. Officials usually create favorable conditions for a "grateful" merchant to win the auction for bribes: a) inclusion of knowingly impossible requirements into the conditions of the tender; and b) creation and admission of one-day firms to the tender that create competition among participants and distract attention from the potential winner.

Corruption crimes in banking are becoming more widespread: money laundering, withdrawal of financial assets offshore, backing of banks by special services, etc. A resonant case in this field was the case of the head of the K banking department of the FSB Economic Security Service, colonel K. Cherkalin and his colleagues, from whom 12 bln rubles were seized during the search. Cherkalin oversaw the fight against crime in the banking sector, participated in the investigation of dozens of criminal cases related to banking fraud, and was well acquainted with the leaders of all major banks of the Russian Federation. The head of the K department used two major informal ways of interacting with banks: 1) percentage of cash funds (0.1 – 0.2 % of the transaction amount) and 2) fixed bribes and kickbacks for specific violations. In the first case, a retired officer (the so-called "deep-cover operative") was sent to the bank from the FSB, who was usually appointed as a head of the bank's economic security service, which allowed to control all cash flows. In the second case, the FSB banking department successfully covered up claims against the troubled banks by the Central Bank. Banks paid for each case of a dubious operation that could result in the revocation of a license. K. Cherkalin was charged with taking bribes (Part 6 of Article 290 of the Criminal Code) in the amount of \$850,000 "for general protection". Former officers of the FSB banking department D. Frolov and A. Vasiliev were accused of large-scale fraud (Part 4 of Article 159 of the Criminal Code).

## Discussion

It must be noted that the topic of corruption has been in the focus of attention of Western authors since the 70s of the 20th century. Despite the advances of science in understanding the causes and mechanism of reproducing corruption, interest in this phenomenon does not decline today. This is due to the persistence of corruption, its ability to adapt to new realities, and transformation of the forms of its manifestation. The geography of the study of corruption has noticeably expanded: earlier, they were mainly economically developed countries, while now they are developing countries. A set

of problem complexes on the understanding of which the attention of researchers is focused has become more diverse.

German historian Jens Ivo Engels carried out a historical analysis of the nature of corruption in the writing "History of corruption. From the Early New Age to the 20th Century", proposing an alternative view of the phenomenon (Engels, 2014). He argued that society recognized and condemned manifestations of corruption even in the Middle Ages, despite the absence of regulations restricting bribery and nepotism. The author insists on the authenticity of the nature of the modern corruption and the one which existed at the dawn of the New Age. Its causes could be better understood and effective ways to combat corruption could be developed through an analysis of the similarities and differences of corruption in different eras.

The impact of migration on the transit of corruption to other countries is considered in the article "On the effect of immigration on destination-country corruption" by Eugen Dimant, Margarete Redlin, and Tim Krieger (Dimant, Redlin, Krieger, 2015). The migration crisis has sparked a surge in corrupt practices in destination countries. The authors prove the existence of a connection between the level of corruption in the country and the influx of migrants from countries affected by corruption to their territory. Migrants do not abandon their usual corrupt behavior in their new homeland and will cultivate it among the indigenous population of the country. This is confirmed by the fact that the level of corruption is growing in the areas where migrants from disadvantaged countries are located. According to the authors, this circumstance should be an alarming signal for the authorities and encourage them to search for new methods of treating visitors from countries with a high level of corruption.

The role of cultural practices in reproducing corruption is explored in an article by Italian anthropologist Davide Torsello "Why Culture Matters for Understanding Corruption" (Torsello, 2015). The main goal of the author is to identify key corruption-related features in the cultures of various countries. Considering the sociocultural aspects of corruption and the tradition of bribery in eight countries of Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, Torsello believes that it is necessary to pay more attention to the specifics of culture in different countries in order to effectively combat corruption. The phenomenon of the existence of "petty corruption" and the practice of "appeasing"

officials is often the result of cultural practices in different countries and regions, independently of each other. D. Torsello is confident that the knowledge of the cultural practices of exchanging services and giving gifts will allow to more effectively build anti-corruption measures in various territories.

Institutional factors of corruption are considered in the article by Dieter Zinnbauer "The Pros and Cons of the Revolving Door Practice" (Zinnbauer, 2015). The author analyzes the principle of "revolving doors" – a transition of power elite members to business structures and vice versa with the actual preservation of elite status in society. Such practices are common in the US and Europe, where the French term "pantouflage" is also used to refer to this model. The author notes the dual effects of this institution. On the one hand, the principle of "revolving doors" simplifies the interaction between the state and business and allows them to understand each other's interests and problems. On the other hand, former government employees are hired by companies not so much because of their professional qualities and managerial skills, but rather due to their connections and acquaintances that are able to provide unique preferences for the company in the market.

The role of academic science in countering corruption is explored in an article by Virna Di Palma (Di Palma, 2015). The author notes the importance of scientific knowledge, because: 1) scientific methods are required to obtain reliable information about the manifestations, causes and consequences of corruption; 2) professional scientists with authority in the media and the expert community can become lobbyists for effective anti-corruption initiatives; and 3) teaching scientists translate the values of transparency and openness to students, the future intellectual elite of the country.

The specifics of the corruption spreading in universities and its consequences are explored in the article by Riccardo Pelizzo "Preventing Corruption by Eradicating Academic Corruption" (Pelizzo, 2015). The author analyzes the impact of corruption in higher education on the formation of ethical attitudes in students. The expert claims that students who encounter various forms of corruption in schools and universities are much more relaxed in the future than those who lack such experience.

The gender dimensions of corruption were the subject of an article by Mohammad Nure Alam

"Women and Corruption in Public Service: the Sri Lankan Experience", which identified gender-based models of women's corrupt practices in public service in Sri Lanka (Alam, 2015). The conservatism of society in Sri Lanka causes gender inequality and is expressed in the fact that women's rights are limited by formal and informal rules. This leads to the fact that women are powerless before the arbitrariness of officials. The study revealed the following consequence of this: among female heads of households, the proportion of those who had to give bribes was significantly higher than among male heads. In addition, the proportion of women involved in corruption differs depending on the economic type of the area of residence and ethnicity. The recommendations of the author of the study are reduced to women strengthening their social and legal status in Sri Lanka through participation in political life and public organizations.

Marie Chêne, Craig Fagan, and Samira Linder also explore the gender context of corruption in their article "Women against Corruption" (Chêne, Fagan, Lindner, 2015). They reveal a correlation between the lowered social status of women in some societies and their forms of vulnerability to corruption. Women are increasingly forced to somehow pay for services that should be provided for free. For example, girls in some African countries provide teachers with sexual services in exchange for an objective assessment of knowledge. In this regard, the authors of the article insist on the necessity of introducing a gender focus in the set of anti-corruption measures. During the development of anti-corruption measures, it is proposed to pay attention to the respondent's gender in the course of corruption research, as well as to the special vulnerability of women to certain types of extortion.

The article by Brigitte Zimmerman "Citizen Responses to Corruption Scandals" (Zimmermann, 2015) is devoted to the perception of corruption in the public mind. The author is trying to understand why citizens change their attitude towards politicians in some cases after learning about the facts of corruption related to them from the media, while in other cases they simply do not pay any attention to such news. The study revealed that people showed greater condescension to the misconduct of government officials to whom they sympathized. In addition, many were indifferent to corruption if they believed that it was beneficial to society to one degree or another.

In her another article titled "Fighting corruption from below," Brigitte Zimmerman tries to determine the degree of public influence, as well as the possibilities and forms of citizen participation in the fight against grassroots corruption based on the practice of citizen involvement in the fight against corruption in various countries (Zimmerman, 2014). Interesting and successful practices were found in different parts of the world. The author connects the willingness to directly participate in anti-corruption activities with how people perceive various forms of corruption, how it is assessed in their social group and in their cultural tradition. For example, the practice of notifying law enforcement about corruption is very common in Malawi, and over 60 % of the local residents surveyed agree with the statement "Malawi citizens can successfully fight grassroots corruption."

The legal mechanisms of combating corruption are explored in the article "Unpacking the Key Anti-Corruption Ingredients for Constitutions" by Samira Linder (Linder, 2015). According to the author, state constitutions can become one of the key tools in combating corruption. It is the country's constitution, which has the highest legal force, that establishes a model for the interaction between government bodies, enshrines the principles of their operation, and carries a significant potential for anti-corruption regulation. In order to realize the potential of the constitution, the author proposes to introduce provisions designed to ensure the transparency of the government operation into the Fundamental Law.

The connection of corruption with the shadow economy is explored in the article by Saibal Kar "Corruption and persistent informality: An empirical investigation for India" (Kar, 2015). Saibal Kar, a professor at the Center for the Study of Social Sciences in Calcutta, identifies the relationship between the level of corruption and the size of the shadow economy. According to the author, the growth of the shadow sector temporarily increases corruption, but only up to a certain point after which this connection is no longer so obvious. At the current stage of development, India has already stepped over this line, and therefore, the authorities should not so much deal with the "gray" economy as they should take care of economic growth. The author admits that a shadow economy can be useful for India, as well as other developing countries, since it provides the population with the benefits they cannot be fully supplied by either the state or legitimate business. At the same time, Saibal Kar

admits that corruption in the shadow economy remains a problem yet to be solved by the government.

Chinese researchers Ting Gong and Na Zhou in their article "Corruption and Marketization: Formal and Informal Rules in Chinese Public Procurement" refute the hypothesis that economic liberalization automatically leads to the eradication of corruption (Gong, Zhou, 2015.) Based on the results of anonymous interviews in one of the provinces of China, the authors identified four ways to circumvent competition laws when holding a tender for public procurement. This practice exists in all developing economies.

In Jong Sung You's monograph "Democracy, Inequality and Corruption", the relationship between inequality and corruption in a democracy is revealed based on a comparative analysis of those countries (Sung You, 2015). The author proves that democracies are less corrupt than authoritarian states by nature. At the same time, there is a strong correlation between the level of corruption and the rootedness of democratic traditions and practices in the country. States with poorly developed democracies have a set of institutional factors that encourage corruption. For example, the dominance of large business lobbyists in politics, on the one hand, and the significant gap between rich and poor, on the other hand, lead to a polarization of the interests of the ruling elite and the majority of citizens. As a result, there is a low level of public support for the authorities, which forces political leaders to resort to election fraud and other measures in order to maintain authoritative positions. Moreover, the limited access of the poor to public goods coupled with the imperfection of the law gives rise to various forms of corruption.

The role of civil society in the fight against corruption is explored by the Italian scientist Luca Saporiti in the article "Social Capital and Corruption" (Saporiti, 2016). The author focuses on the importance of an increasing number of informal social connections and contacts, which is an indicator of public trust in the modern society. The author suggests two trends on the impact of "social capital" on the level of corruption. On the one hand, the presence of social capital simplifies the interaction between people, eliminating the need to resort to corruption in order to achieve their goals. On the other hand, the tendency of people to interact with those whose gender, religious or national identity coincides with their own, in the first

place, leads to fragmentation of society into unequal social groups, which creates favorable conditions for corruption.

## Conclusion

As a result, the modern corruption researchers focus on both traditional issues (causes, manifestations, countermeasures) and new components of corruption practices (gender and mental corruption factors, social deformations, and cultural practices of corrupt manifestations in non-Western cultures). A return to the analysis of the nature of corruption is explained by the desire to understand how the nature of corruption changes over time, as there are some patterns in this process.

It must be noted that the authors pay special attention to the search for a mechanism for the reproduction and dissemination of corrupt practices, which is not reduced to the vicious nature of a human, their greed and self-interest, but is due to the various contexts of this complex phenomenon. Different types of societies have their mechanisms of reproduction; it is extremely difficult to derive a universal formula for the emergence and reproduction of corrupt practices – at least, because the combination of conditions, factors, and causes of corruption varies from country to country. By the degree of prevalence of certain factors that give rise to corruption, scientists conditionally distinguish universal factors (valid in all countries) and local factors (valid in individual countries). To a large extent, the process of reproducing corruption in a particular society and the attitude of the population to it are determined by the following factors: 1) the type of society (traditional or civil, western or eastern); 2) the cultural code of society – a set of values (freedom or equality, individual or collective rights, justice, order, etc.) and generally accepted patterns of behavior; 3) dysfunction or effectiveness of legal social institutions; 4) specialization of managerial roles and functions within the state or their merger; 5) political regime – democratic or authoritarian; 6) dominant ideology or religion; 7) models of the distribution of public goods (collectivist or individualist); 8) ethical standards, etc. The above factors influence the process of reproduction and dissemination of corrupt practices in various countries in varying degrees. A fact of interest is a detected trend for the decreasing role of ethical norms in the anti-corruption mechanism among public servants (David-Barrett, 2015). According to the director of the Center for the Study of Corruption at the University of Oxford Lisa David-Barrett, "codes

of conduct" for civil servants as an anti-corruption tool are by no means as effective as they may seem to be today and are not suitable as the main measure to prevent corruption in government bodies. They are very effective only in cases when the reputation of the department needs to be restored after a corruption scandal. An equally noteworthy conclusion is that increasing salaries for civil servants as a way to proactively combat corruption is far from as effective as it may seem. The logic "the more they get paid, the less they want to take risks in the fear to lose a position" does not work (Dimant, 2015).

The researchers focus on anti-corruption processes in the post-communist countries that are transiting democracy. The change in the historical paradigm and the transition from autocracy to democratic values all leave their imprint on the perception and attitude to corruption of the elites and citizens of these states. Corruption practices were reduced in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where civil society institutions developed progressively, and vice versa.

The main applied area of the research into corruption is the search for the answer to the question of why corruption is rapidly penetrating into all spheres of the modern society, despite the measures taken by all states and turning into the main threat to sustainable development, which includes achieving 17 goals: 1) eradication of poverty; 2) elimination of hunger; 3) good health and well-being 4) high-quality education 5) gender equality; 6) clean water and sanitation; 7) low-cost and clean energy; 8) decent work and economic growth; 9) industrialization, innovation, and infrastructure; 10) reducing inequality; 11) sustainable cities and towns; 12) responsible consumption and production; 13) fight against climate change; 14) preservation of marine ecosystems; 15) conservation of terrestrial ecosystems; 16) peace, justice, and effective institutions; and 17) partnership for sustainable development. Corruption has catastrophic consequences for the sustainable development process, as funds intended for schools, hospitals, and other vital state structures are instead redirected to criminals or dishonest officials. This is evidenced by damage that corruption causes to the economies of various countries. According to the UN, the total amount of bribes worldwide was estimated at USD 1 trillion in 2017, and the economic loss from corruption was estimated at USD 2.6 trillion – the amount equivalent to 5 % of the world GDP (United Nations, n.d.).

Conclusions and recommendations for Russia  
Achievement of actual progress in the fight against corruption and the strengthening of democratic institutions and norms in Russia are possible through the consistent operation of law enforcement agencies and a high degree of involvement of all civil society institutions in this struggle. The gap between the anti-corruption legislation and its practical implementation is a permanent flaw in the anti-corruption policy in Russia. The poor enforcement performance is not only due to the low qualifications of the investigating authorities, but also due to the departmental fragmentation of the competent authorities designed to combat corruption.

The implementation of the following effective measures is required for the effective control of corruption:

1. Personal responsibility should be introduced (from federal executive bodies: from ministers, heads of regions, and municipalities, as well as heads of state corporations) for the implementation of the "National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2018 – 2020" approved by V. Putin on June 30, 2018. Preparation and implementation of the state, national, regional, and sectoral plans should be included in the system for evaluating the performance of a particular leader. The new "National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2018 – 2020" focuses on the fight against corruption practices in public procurement and the contract system. A separate part is devoted to the fight against corruption practices in the State Duma, the Federation Council, and deputies in general.
2. The progress of the National Plan implementation at all levels of government should be monitored for its proper operation. At the same time, authorities and corporations should be obliged to post the anti-corruption story publicly on their websites. In order to overcome the formal approach, the National Plan provides for the creation of working groups to control and monitor the level of corruption, as well as the development of sociological research methods by the respective ministries that will allow to measure the level of corruption.
3. The anti-corruption legislation should be improved to make it relevant to the challenges of the time. The meaning of

the proposed legislative acts is not about toughening the punishment for corruption, but about its inevitability.

- a) An article on the "illegal enrichment" – the acquisition of property by a public official with funds the origin of which cannot be explained or which are received in violation of the law – should be introduced in the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation to protect the country's budget system and implement national projects, as well as to effectively control the income of politicians and officials of all levels of power. This recommendatory punishment is contained in Article 20 of the UN Convention against Corruption, which Russia has ratified, with the exception of this article. In this case, the illegal enrichment should begin to count from the amount of one million rubles, and the penalty for violation should be a ten-fold fine of the illegally obtained amount. An additional mechanism was established in 2018 to counter corruption in the public procurement system. Amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure were adopted in 2018 in order to minimize corruption practices in public procurement. They criminalize abuses in the procurement of goods, works, and services to meet state or municipal needs, bribery of a contract service employee, contract manager, and a member of a procurement commission, and provocation of bribery in the field of public procurement.
  - b) The institution of criminal liability of legal entities should be introduced in the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. The relevance of this measure is due to the fact that most of the money and financial instruments acquired through corruption are transferred abroad through legal entities. Close interaction and effective cooperation with competent authorities of foreign states is needed in order to return the assets that were transferred abroad but belong to the state within the period of the preliminary investigation.
  - c) The investigators should be empowered to request information constituting bank secrecy – not only in criminal matters, but also on the materials of pre-investigative checks, by amending Article 26 of the Federal Law No. 395-1 "On Banks and Banking Activities" dated December 2, 1990. The relevance of this novel is caused by the aspiration of the audited persons to take active steps to conceal their property at the stage of the pre-investigation audit.
  - d) An article on the confiscation of the illegally appropriated goods should be reinstated in the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. Combating corruption cannot be effective without confiscation. There are mechanisms for the seizure of objects and means of illicit enrichment through the civil process today, but they can be long and costly. In order to increase the preventive effect of criminal law measures for damages, it is proposed to reinstate the confiscation of property in the list of punishments in Article 44 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation as an additional form of punishment indicating the possibility of its application in sanctions of specific articles of the Special Part of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation on corruption-related crimes. Confiscation is rarely used by the courts measures in judicial practice.
4. The degree of involvement of citizens and public organizations in public control over government spending at all levels of government, including local, should be increased. This requires the following:
- a) Maintaining unified statistics on corruption crimes using blockchain. Various departments (Supreme Court, Prosecutor General's Office, Investigative Committee, FSB, Ministry of Internal Affairs, etc.) use departmental statistics on corruption-related crimes today, which does not allow creating an integral and objective picture of the prevalence of corruption practices. A significant drawback of the modern statistics is that for the most part, the structures publish information related to specific corruption cases, which significantly complicates the perception of the situation as a whole, in the public domain on the official websites of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation, the Federal

Security Service, and other state agencies. The information obtained on the basis of specific statistics on corruption cases is more reliable knowledge than the data based on subjective opinions obtained from the media. A holistic picture of corruption in Russia should be formed based on verified knowledge, as well as on expert assessments of the effectiveness of the anti-corruption system. As such, the complacency of the population towards corruption can be changed, and an attitude of zero tolerance for its manifestations can be formed.

- b) Public lists of the politicians and officials of all levels who have been found to be corrupt and disqualified should be made available.
- c) Given the inevitability of the emergence of new corrupt practices, the scientific potential of studying and measuring forms of corruption should be increased, and relevant methods of countering them should be created on this basis.

Any form of corruption is a serious obstacle to the sustainable development of the modern Russia and its implementation of national projects. Achieving such ambitious goals requires eradicating the causes and conditions that give rise to corruption and dismantling the mechanism of its reproduction. The National Strategy and national anti-corruption plans are focused on this, the level of responsibility for corruption crimes is increased, and law enforcement practice is improved. However, all these measures will not yield the expected result if the atmosphere of zero tolerance for corruption is not formed in society.

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