Resource management of political influence during crisis

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Abstract. The article discusses approaches to crisis management based on the resources of political influence. The research is based on a dynamic model of resources of political influence, which includes the main resources of trust and competence, which, in turn, allow mobilizing and optimal distributing of material resources. The importance of resources of political influence in various aspects and at various stages of crisis management and anti-crisis communications has been demonstrated. On the basis of a systematic approach to the development of social systems, the features of the processes of substitution and compensation of resources in the conditions of crisis dynamics of the system are analyzed. Possibilities of concentration of power resources in crisis conditions are considered. The perspective of modern approaches to public management based on information, data and knowledge management and based on social intelligence is revealed. The study was conducted on the material of individual nuclear cities during the first wave of the spread of the new coronavirus infection.

Key words: Crisis, governance, resources, political influence, trust, competence.

1. Relevance

The growing crisis, turbulence of socio-political and economic processes in the modern world affects all levels of social systems from global to local. The pandemic caused by the spread of a new coronavirus infection has affected not only all parts of the world and regions of the world, but has manifested itself even in relatively closed and remote loci. The most important is the question of managerial influence at all stages of the development of the crisis from early anticipation to post-crisis development. At the same time, it is obvious that neither the administrative-command methods associated with a tough impact on society in the pre-crisis period, nor the hopes for self-regulation of social systems are effective, at least, in Russian conditions.

Tough methods cause a sharp response from citizens, affecting the legitimacy of the authorities, and connivance leads to the transition of crisis processes into an uncontrolled phase, and the responsibility for this is again placed on the authorities. It is required to develop flexible tools for managing the impact on crisis processes, the transition to technologies of political influence in a crisis.
2. The degree of elaboration of the problem
The concept of a crisis and its political aspects has been studied quite well in modern domestic and foreign literature [1], but it is often possible to notice a false identification of a crisis with a conflict. From our point of view, the conflict, on the contrary, is a consequence and sign of the transition of the crisis to an uncontrollable phase. When discussing crisis management issues, on the contrary, one should focus on issues of cooperation, in the language of transitology, the “conclusion of a pact” on the way out of the crisis. In terms of crisis management, scientific and practical literature on crisis communications is of interest [2]. In particular, T. Coombs, relying on the psychological concept of attribution, actually shows that the choice of the optimal strategy for managing crisis communication depends on the previously achieved level of trust between the authorities (management, administration) and the community, which is affected by the negative consequences of the crisis. It is the level of trust that determines the scale of the necessary compensatory measures [3].

It also emphasizes the importance of the resource of competence in crisis management as the ability of the headquarters to become a center of knowledge about the nature, causes, course and consequences of the crisis.

Less attention in Western literature is paid to the systemic and material aspects of the crisis, since ideas about the crisis and crisis communications develop there against the background of relatively prosperous social systems. However, in systems where deep dysfunctions and systemic gaps existed even before the crisis, such as the absence of the necessary elements of the socio-economic or administrative infrastructure, the crisis is most acute and the problem of power redistribution of resources and their replacement arises.

In general, there is a consensus in the literature on management regarding the combination of material and non-material, hard and soft resources of influence in an optimal political and managerial strategy based on social, emotional, contextual intelligence, which represent the most significant resource of a leader's competence [4].

At the same time, the existing achievements of management thought are only fragmentarily included in the management practices of various levels of government in Russia. This article is one of the experiments of combining the theory and practice of crisis management in the Russian context on the basis of the "coronacrisis".

3. Methodology
The very etymology of the word "resource" indicates restoration, compensation and, at the same time, management, that is, it initially contains important meanings of anti-crisis management. The research is based on a dynamic model of political influence resources, in which they are subdivided into trust resources, competence resources and material resources. Usually in models of resource management in project management, other classifications are used, including, as a rule, material ("property"), financial, human, organizational (administrative), information resources. We proceed from the premise that the key political resource is the ability to mobilize other forms of resources, including material ones. To mobilize means to direct resources to specific goals, a manager needs the trust of the resource holders, an understanding of the mechanisms for the circulation of these resources and the ability to convince that resources should be directed precisely for these purposes. Competency can be understood differently as the sphere of authority of a manager or manager to mobilize resources, in this sense is identical to an administrative resource. But we insist on a broader understanding of the resource of competence as necessarily including administrative capabilities, but not being exhausted by them. Trust, in a sense, can also be viewed through the prism of administrative resources, in particular, as the presence or absence of the President's trust in the region's top official. However, in our concept, trust is considered as the accumulated political capital of a government or a leader associated with a successful experience in solving social problems by government or management.
As it has already been highlighted, both resources trust and competence play a key role in crisis management. In literature, there are two fundamental approaches to crisis management:

1. Crisis knowledge management - identifying sources, collecting and analyzing information, creating knowledge, disseminating knowledge and making decisions.
2. Managing the reaction of stakeholders - communicative efforts (statements and actions) aimed at the perception of the crisis by the interested (affected) parties, at the perception of the organization and its actions in a crisis.

Obviously, the first is based on the resource of competence, and the second is on trust.

The following stages are distinguished in the competence-based crisis management.

1. Scanning of the environment. Search for early signals of a crisis (problems) and counteraction to the growth of problems.
2. Planning for a crisis prevention. From scanning to monitoring. Threats are assessed in terms of possible damage, degree of control over the situation, options for responding to critical growth of the problem.
3. Preparing a plan, a team and a speaker in a crisis.
4. After the end of the crisis, knowledge about it is systematized and used in the future. The issue continues to be monitored.

At the same time, the resource of competence is also intensively used in the operational management of the crisis. In this case, such a connotation of the word “competence” is manifested as “competitiveness”, “competitiveness” (Eng. to compete). The following characteristics of competence are most important here:

- Fast (it is advisable to comment on the crisis faster than other sources).
- Authority. To become not only a headquarters, but an analytical center collecting information about the crisis.
- Mastering the agenda. The organization (municipality) should become the main center for information about the crisis ("thunder kidnapping").
- Reliability of information and consistency in its presentation (speak "with one voice").

The resource of trust is fundamentally important in choosing the optimal strategy for responding to a crisis. There are ten main strategies of this kind:

1. Denial: the authorities declare that there is no crisis.
2. "Scapegoat": the authorities blame someone from outside for the crisis.
3. Attacking the accuser: The authorities oppose the group or person who accuses the organization.
4. Justification: the authorities declare that the crisis is beyond their control and no one wanted to cause any harm.
5. Blame mitigation: The authorities are trying to reduce the perceived damage from the crisis.
6. Integration: a call for peace and a reminder of past successful government activities.
7. Caring: The authorities express caring for the victims of the crisis.
8. Compensation: The authorities offer money or other benefits to the victims.
9. Regret: The authorities express shock at the crisis.
10. Apologies: the government takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks the victims for forgiveness.

If the government has a resource of trust, then all ten instruments are available to it. With a critically low level of trust, in fact, only the last four options are available, but there are cases when the victims of the crisis did not accept an apology or even a compensation.

The universal “method” of crisis response is care. The subject of management can and should show concern even with a critical level of trust, but even this necessary human level of reaction can be assessed as a hypocrisy if the credit of trust in the authorities has been exhausted.

The concept of a control object as a system is methodologically significant for us, as well as a crisis as a nonequilibrium state of the system. The crisis as the destruction of structures, statuses, roles and
institutions, is, on the one hand, a challenge to the authorities, and on the other, it involves the emergence of a number of management tasks to compensate for those gaps that arise in the most crisis-prone subsystems, elements or components of the social system. Otherwise, the crisis may acquire a systemic character, resulting in the destruction of the social system. Based on this, the key task of the authorities is to channel the resources of political influence on the mobilization of resources in order to replace the decaying elements of the system (including their own reputation, since otherwise the possibilities of influencing the situation are leveled). At the same time, the “washing out” of resources from other spheres in the process of “patching holes” can also lead to a systemic crisis. This is especially sensitive in the case when the system as a whole is underdeveloped and has a number of functional gaps. A striking example is the closure of small and medium-sized businesses during the acute period of the pandemic, which led to an economic and socio-psychological crisis.

At the same time, the crisis, as it is known, is always a source of opportunities, including the ability of the authorities to concentrate additional political resources. The correct leadership strategy at the stage of overcoming the crisis can provide an exceptional profit for political capital. So against the backdrop of the rapid overcoming of the first wave of coronavirus, the ruling party in South Korea secured an unprecedented majority in parliament.

The way to prevent the risks of a systemic crisis is to maintain an effective system of political governance in the territory, including well-established interactions between the government and all stakeholders and higher levels of government, and the absence of basic conflicts. At the same time, it is important to systematically develop the territory, to avoid gaps that can have an effect in a crisis situation. So, chronic wear and tear of housing and communal services or transport networks can be fatal aggravating factors in a pandemic or environmental disaster.

4. Empirical research
As part of an empirical study, case studies were carried out in three cities with the presence of nuclear energy and industry in the Sverdlovsk region, they are Zarechny, Novouralsk and Lesnoy. They represent different types of nuclear cities with city-forming enterprises belonging to different divisions of the State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom. Two of them, Novouralsk and Lesnoy, are closed administrative territorial entities, the population of Zarechny is 27 thousand people, Lesnoy is 49 thousand, Novouralsk is 80 thousand. Cities differ in the level of trust in the authorities according to monitoring of social networks in the period from November 2019 to November 2020 in Zarechny as a whole they do not trust the administration, in Novouralsk the attitude towards the head has not yet been formed, and in Lesnoy one can speak of trust in the authorities. Actually, this became the key to the proper mobilization of resources within the framework of the first wave of the new coronavirus infection spread in the territory of Lesnoy, thanks to which the “zero patient” appeared in the city only at the end of April 2020. In terms of competence, it should be noted that Lesnoy is one of the first in the country, in early February 2020 (!) to hold a meeting of the Commission on Civil Defense and Emergencies, dedicated to the spread of Covid-19. An effective public awareness campaign was conducted both on behalf of the head and on behalf of the responsible speaker in the city administration. This was the result of building a clear system of public information in the pre-crisis period. In Novouralsk, thanks to the support of the head's efforts to inform the public, it was generally possible to mitigate the crisis mood, but the crisis exacerbated other chronic problems of the municipality, including political conflicts. There were contradictions with the deputies, the Public Security Department of the Sverdlovsk Region, negative assessments of the administration's activities in social networks. The joint experience of the administration and the Novouralsk Center for Entrepreneurship Support in providing assistance to small and medium-sized businesses has become successful. It was built on effective communication and attraction of resources from all levels of the budget, as well as from the State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom. In the city of Zarechny, almost immediately from the beginning
of the first wave of coronavirus in Russia, several employees of the city-forming enterprise became infected, as a result of which the entire team was quarantined. The administration delayed the publication on the number of Covid-19 cases, communication in the media was formal, a number of political conflicts escalated, representatives of small and medium-sized businesses held a scandalous picket with the "funeral of a small entrepreneur."

5. Conclusions
The management of resources of political influence in a crisis is based on a dynamic resource model, the key in which are the resources of trust and competence, which, in turn, allow the mobilization and optimal distribution of material resources.

The crisis radically affects the distribution of resources of influence, creating the possibility of both the complete destruction of statuses and a significant build-up of political capital. In the distribution of material resources, the key factors of anti-crisis mobilization are compensation and replacement, while in the event of an inferiority of the social system, new critical gaps may arise that can lead to a systemic crisis.

The concept of resource conversion has a significant heuristic potential, which implies not a simple redistribution, but a qualitatively new use of a resource in a new area with a new result. Thus, coaching on business optimization, lean production, and sustainable entrepreneurship has become one of the forms of business support.

In general, information campaigns and the development of the authorities' communicative competencies, the exchange of best practices and the accumulation of knowledge in the field of anti-crisis management played a significant role in overcoming the crisis trends.

The crisis has confirmed the relevance of such aspects of modern public management as the management of information, data and knowledge based on social intelligence, building trusting relations between the authorities and citizens.

6. References
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