HUMAN SECURITY AND STATE FUNCTIONING IN THE CONTEXT OF PANDEMIC AND POST-PANDEMIC COVID-19

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The recent pandemic COVID-19 has become inevitably a comprehensive crisis that challenges, like a war, the very state and society functioning. The situation of global instability and fear puts a logical question: who is responsible for vital things – security and safety of citizens? The traditional answer is the national state, as it constitutes its natural function. However, in last decades this postulate has only caused controversy and extended debates among academics and practitioners who support an idea of reducing the state role and loosing some of its functions in globalizing world in favour of civil society as well as trans- and supranational institutions. The principle purpose of this article is to reveal objective grounds for re-etatization of public life and renationalization of international relations during the period of countering pandemic and at the post-pandemic stage. The authors are also endeavoring to join discussions concerning setting the limits of state powers expanding in a crisis, as well as the validity of the absolutism in etatistic, authoritarian and paternalistic practices as universal tools of crisis management. The problems under discussion are considered through the milieu of ensuring and preservation of human rights, freedoms and security of human communities.

Introduction

In a globalizing world, one of the most discussed problems is the definition of a political and social actor responsible for the security of citizens and guaranteeing their social achievements. It is much more

difficult to respond to this question unambiguously in the realities of current situation than during the so-called the Peace of Westphalia and the system of territorially organized sovereign states. On the one hand, we are witnessing deep processes of formation of a new political structure of the world, in which sovereignty is increasingly transferred from national states to self-governing communities, transnational and supranational actors. Proponents of liberalism believe that this process is irreversible, and, as a result, it can stipulate the elimination of the state as an institution (Keohane, 1996, Hardt & Negri, 2004, Cooper, 2011). On the other hand, the decline in the role of sovereign states in globalization processes is not accompanied by the creation of legitimate authorities at the global level, which would assume such a function, and which would be controlled by citizens. Currently, there is a possibility of the emergence of supranational structures holding authoritarian character, which do not express the interests of citizens at all but a limited number of the most influential international actors, e.g., transnational corporations (Сирота, 2007). The pandemic of the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that resulted in the COVID-19 infection have significantly updated the problem of ensuring the physical and social security of population and raised the problem concerning those who are responsible for providing citizens with the legal right to a favorable living environment.

Reetatization as a Social Reaction to the Pandemic

As the scale and range of consequences of the humanitarian crisis triggered by the new coronavirus pandemic have expanded, it has become evident that the only way to effectively counter the increase in human morbidity and mortality caused by the infection, as well as to limit the manifestations of panic and chaos in social relations is possible at the national level. Various supranational inter-state organizations and associations such as the UN World Health Organization, the European Union, on the one hand, and municipal and regional structures, on the other hand, failed to provide in most cases an adequate response to the disaster. The reason for this was the functional unwillingness and structural inability of all these actors to concentrate and express the interests of the population at the national level. The state has proved to be the only established structure that was able to aggregate the current public demand for the safety and survival of the entire population within national borders and proposed appropriate

measures. These measures have been implemented with varying degrees of effectiveness and are known commonly as, for example, the "German", "South Korean", "Chinese" models of fighting coronavirus (Tennison, 2020). The core role of the state in influencing the national situation is determined by the availability of a number of tools. Firstly, the state is the only political organization that has sovereignty within the borders of its territory, which means the supremacy of legitimate institutions of power in internal affairs and the general obligation of the entire population of the country to fulfill them. The state enforces this right with all means of influence and coercion. Due to their sovereign powers, national states were able to establish their administrative and regulatory activities in various spheres of social life and, first of all in the system of health care, as well as to maintain peace and order in public relations preventing undesirable behaviour of people, whether it was panic in China, looting in Spain and Italy, or race riots in the United States. Secondly, it is the state that only supports an extensive network of special structures responsible for the health, well-being and safety of its citizens. In many countries, the departments of health, social welfare, and law enforcement and their territorial divisions have generally managed to cope with their functional responsibilities in the face of widespread fear and uncertainty. This is evidenced by fairly high rates of support of government measures to combat COVID-19 by the population in various countries[1]. Thirdly, it is the state that possesses considerable material and financial resources which can be quickly summoned up and applied as a crisis response. In that way, according to *Forbes*, Germany has allocated budget funds aimed to combat coronavirus that exceed 1/3 of the country's GDP, the US has spent no less than 12.4% of GDP for this purpose, Russia used 1.2% of GDP and it is ready to increase this volume by 3–4 times (Buttlar, 2020). Since February till June 2020 up to 100% of pre-constructed infection clinics were built in China and Russia at the expenses of the state, mostly by defense departments of these countries (Williams, 2020). Moreover, state institutions continue to control and fund the majority of researches in applied and basic science, including medicine as well (Le Marie, 2020). The role of the state in shaping the moral atmosphere in communal life still remains crucial. All possible communication means are

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1   The research of the British global public opinion and data company YouGov (March, 2020) revealed the general satisfaction of European citizens in actions of their governments: the Danes support their national government in 85%, the Germans and the British people in 72%, the French – in 54%, the Italians – in 66%, the Spaniards – in 46%. Source: *YouGov*. https://yougov.co.uk/topics/international/ articles-reports/2020/03/17/level-support-actions-governments-could-take 29/06/2020.

employed to encourage responsible attitude of citizens to their health and safety, social solidarity and law-abiding behavior.

The above mentioned makes possible to conclude that the state institution (regardless of the form of government) is still the only one that passes the test of strength in the context of the global pandemic. Various social actors appeal to it in anticipation of adequate measures, and the state does its best to implement these measures. As far as there are no alternative options, the national state remains the leading actor in social policy, and during the pandemic and similar crises re-etatization becomes a natural response of community to its security threats.

Pandemic and Renationalization of International Relations

The process of the actual restoration of the state's sovereign powers in various spheres of public life has also encompassed the foreign policy. This process has commenced in the beginning of the XXI century, when the renationalization of international life and the return of the core role of the state were discussed on various occasions – ranging from the need to counter terrorism to guarantees of banking system stability and markets manageability (Лукьянов, 2020). The climax of this new movement became the slogan of the "Brexit" – "Take back control!" which implied a rejection of globalist development goals and marked a return to national and state interests. The rapid proliferation of the COVID-19 pandemic has given the trend of both dynamism and specificity. States launched vigorous measures to combat the new coronavirus using their own resources and relying only on their own. National models for responding to the pandemic were developed, and control over the movement of people and goods across borders was restored. The cooperation between states has been maintained but at a minimal level, since every side focused on their limited capabilities. At the same time, the secondary and auxiliary nature of supranational institutions (including pan-European ones) was revealed. National states appeared to be better equipped to fight for vital interests and security issues of their citizens. As a result, the world agenda was completely revised within six months – the motto "Every man for himself" became relevant in international life, and national egoism took place in rhetoric regarding common values and solidarity (Барабанов и др., 2020).

Thus, state institutions continue to define the limits of their power in foreign policy, and the adjustment of international relations context went towards a renationalization in line with the general trend of re-etatization of public life within the shocking character of the global crisis.

State Strengthening and Security of Citizens: Side Effects

By providing a solution to the vital issue of survival for citizens and putting the health of the nation at the forefront of economic and social policy, the state has thus assumed the main risks and bore significant costs. In this regard, the authorities almost everywhere demanded to delegate additional powers to themselves, and citizens were encouraged to put up with public spending and increased control (Schäuble, 2020). Certainly, such a request seems justified within a large-scale disaster, and in general it fits the framework of the classic concept of "social contract" (Hobbes, 1651). At the same time, there is a growing fear in society that inevitable anti-crisis measures may cross the line beyond which total nationalization starts.

Indeed, there are many grounds for such anxiety. After initial ignoring the danger of spreading the coronavirus, authorities in many countries demonstrated later an overexaggerated reaction. In order to prevent infection among the population, states closed borders and restricted migration. This resulted in a breakdown in industrial production and logistics chains and forced the national economies to shrink to the limits of domestic markets[2]. Since all these measures were initiated and regulated by the state, many researchers assume that the process of state intervention into economies by restricting market mechanisms will continue and may become irreversible (Crabtree et al., 2020).

Even more disturbing to the public is the expansion of state control over the population under a plausible pretext of ensuring citizens' safety. One of the most successful examples of fighting the coronavirus proliferation appeared to be South Korea, which practiced disclosure of updating

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2   Some governments initiated direct subsidizing strategically important sectors of national economies and have even resorted to nationalizing large companies (for example, in Italy). Source: Asquith, J. Could airlines be nationalized? As Italy takes full ownership of Alitalia. Will more airlines follow? *Forbes.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesasquith/2020/04/01/could-airlines-be-nationalised-as-italy-takes-full-ownership-of-alitalia-will-more-airlines-follow/#51aa687977df 02/07/2020.

information about all movements of people infected by COVID-19 by means of mobile phones GPS navigation, CCTV and credit cards (Kyung-wha, 2020). South Korean experience may be in demand all over the world. De facto, the authorities in many countries have obtained technologies for total digital surveillance of their people, as well as selective control. At the end of the pandemic they can be used, for example, to identify participants in protests, rallies, demonstrations, or to restrict the free movement of certain categories of people. Thus, society may face an unattractive alternative: either accept occasional restrictions of basic rights and freedoms (to movement, to free assembly, to business), or sacrifice the anonymity of personal data and privacy of living space keeping in mind a kind intention to preserve them. At the end point, both tracks lead to the dystopia previously described by G. Orwell (Orwell, 1948).

However, human fears concerning the emergence of a Big state go even further. In a number of countries, some people believe that authorities deliberately use temporary restrictions on political and civil liberties to "push up" profitable solutions („Платформа", Социологический антикризисный центр, 2020). In the Russian Federation, for example, during the period of quarantine, very controversial amendments to the Criminal Code were adopted; the law on a single digital register of population data was passed through the Parliament, decisions to switch from traditional to distant education of school children are being persistently lobbied, other unpopular measures are being taken. The prospect of turning the state into a self-sufficient and dominating the society Leviathan arouses indignation and protest among communities. Supported with the economic crisis and social hardships, this protest can cause a multiplier effect, which, in fact, we saw this spring and summer in Hong Kong and the United States. However, the interests of the state and society do not include further escalation of tension, so it is obvious that in the post-pandemic period, the state's natural tendency to ethatization will be balanced by new demands of citizens to ensure their rights to freedom and security.

State and Human Security in Post-pandemic Period

The increased aspiration of citizens for getting better quality of state power and management focused on eliminating the threat to life and overcoming economic consequences caused by the pandemic have a natural basis. In many countries, substantial changes are recorded in the

consciousness and mood of people (Crabtree et al., 2020). And these changes take on a value-based, fundamental character. On the one hand, we can observe a growth in aggression towards authorities, as it was already mentioned above. On the other hand, the request for a "strong hand" has almost disappeared and citizens are increasingly demand respect for their rights. Everyday, material values have lost the principle attraction for people, but so-called "post-materialistic" goals among which the issues of the rule of law, guaranteeing personal rights and freedoms, compliance with political procedures, and requests for policy and social justice have increased (Дмитриев, Белановский, Никольская, 2018). Citizens show criticism of national foreign policies, they require a peaceful agenda and declare an intention to improve relations with other countries, not to aggravate the outcomes of forced autarky during the acute struggle against the pandemic (Göpel, 2020).

The state and official authorities cannot ignore this social position, regardless of the degree of democracy or autocracy of political regimes that dominate them. Finally, the quality of any state, including its ability to protect the lives and security of people, will not determine the form of government, but the effectiveness of management and public solidarity, whether during the pandemic or in the recovery period. And the achievement of the latter condition will be defined by the extent to which the state is able to pass between the Scylla of public request for efficiency and reasonable limitation of its powers in a crisis, and the Charybdis of strict administration and total nationalization of public life.

Conclusion

Large-scale crises and cataclysms, which undoubtedly include the recent COVID-19 pandemic, generate forecasts predicting that the world would not be the same anymore. We support this statement but only partially. The modern world has been changing already rapidly, the only question is which trends will be interrupted during the crisis, and which will become stronger. It is quite obvious that the previous tendency on the "erosion of the sovereignty" of states and "de-sovereignization" will no longer be decisive. The national state has outlived itself only in the past. In the context of a global crisis this institution maintains and increases its military and political functions, performs administrative and regulatory functions in various strata of society. The role of the state in ensuring the

life, health and safety of citizens has been dominant. In order to combat the coronavirus, the state assumed all risks and responsibilities which entailed a further increase in its powers. However, it would be too simple to assume that increasing the state's role in public life will be an unrestrained process. Etatistic, authoritarian and paternalistic practices are perfect for crisis management, but they do not take into account the urgent need of community to adjust the functions of the state as the most important institution of the political system. During the post-pandemic period, we will most likely face a new and specific phenomenon of adapting state forms of social structure to changing conditions, attempts to "embed" the state in complex post-crisis interventions, participation in which is impossible without its economic viability and social responsibility.

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