

**GOVERNMENT CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: RUSSIAN AND
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE**Boris A. Andreyev¹Natalia A. Shibanova²Roman V. Penkovtsev³

Abstract: Conflict management in public authorities is a system of management measures for the diagnosis, prevention, overcoming and neutralization of crisis situations and manifestations, as well as their causes in various government structures. Such an activity involves prediction of the degree of danger of crisis manifestations in public authorities, study of its symptoms, as well as measures to reduce the negative effects of the crisis and usage of its features for subsequent development. Each management to a certain extent has a place to be anti-crisis or begins to become so in degree of entry of the organization into the period of crisis development. Neglect of such a situation entails rather negative consequences, while its consideration contributes to an effective way out of different crisis situations [1]. The research methodology

involves a thorough analysis of crisis management, as well as the conflict essence in government structures. The article attempts to distinguish between the concepts of “crisis” and “conflict”, “management” and “settlement”. The theory of conflict acts as a methodological basis. Crisis management in government bodies has an impact subject represented by crisis factors, that is, all factors of exacerbation of contradictions, causing the risk of its extreme manifestation, the onset of a serious crisis. The paramount importance and priority of crisis management in various state bodies reflects the need for any organization and person to overcome, resolve and settle crisis situations, to make possible mitigation of its consequences, and to use its potential. Understanding of crisis and conflict as a natural and inevitable

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phenomenon in the process of development of the organization determines the relevance of constant research, creation, improvement of crisis management mechanisms.

Keywords: Crisis management, conflict, crisis, government agencies, conflict management, anti-crisis policy, public administration.

1 Introduction

The problem of differentiation of the concepts of “conflict” and “crisis” has not found a final solution at the present stage. In this work, a conflict is understood as a type of social interaction caused by clash of opinions, interests, values of subjects and accompanied by a sense of threat to at least one of the parties. Crisis is an acute non-standard manifestation of a conflict, threatening priority goals and characterized by dysfunctionality and disorganization of the system. In the well-known classic work, Charles Hermann identifies three defining features of the crisis: surprise, threat, lack of time for reaction [2]. The first feature does not look as unambiguous as the following two: a crisis can be preceded by a long latent

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period, at the same time, the crisis can be spontaneous (which often happens when an organization collides with non-standard natural or technogenic factors). Thus, the threat in the crisis can come not only from the social subject, which in turn determines the specific nature of crisis management. “Conflict resolution” is the introduction of norms and rules governing conflict interactions, limiting the escalation and forms of force interactions. Conflict management is conscious impact on all elements of the conflict at any stage of the conflict with a view to its development in the most desirable direction. Thus, crisis management is a specific conflict management that takes into account the features of the subjects and the lack of time.

Crisis management is a type of management within which controlled processes of anticipating crisis situations, mitigating their negative consequences and using crisis factors for the subsequent development of a public authority take place.

Crisis management covers a wide area of the body of knowledge and the analysis results of practical experience aimed at optimizing the

factors of system regulation, detecting hidden mechanisms, developing potential at a complex development stage [3]. A feature of crisis management is directly related to the need for complex management decisions in uncertain dilemmas that are at risk in time-constrained situations.

The specific nature of crisis management in the state structures and government bodies is primarily determined by the human factor, the prospect of active and decisive activity of a person in a crisis situation, his/her interest in resolving the crisis, the ability to determine the factors and nature of the crisis, as well as its patterns [4]. Initiative actions of a person make it possible to search and find ways out of the most difficult crisis situations, focus efforts on resolving the most acute problems, use the experience gained in overcoming crisis phenomena, and adapt to newly arising difficult situations.

Crisis situations are diverse; in this regard, their management can also be very different. This diversity is revealed in the control system and processes, and especially in the control mechanism. Not all the possibilities of

exposure can give the necessary effect in a pre-crisis or crisis phenomenon [1].

2 Methods

When studying this topic, we used a general scientific dialectical approach, as well as methods of analysis and synthesis, a comparative analysis method and a structural-functional method. The theory of conflict allows considering conflict as a natural process that has both positive and negative manifestations. We analyzed crisis management of conflicts in the government structures, as well as studied a variety of information sources.

3 Results And Discussion

Conflict lies in the very nature of state power, which is designed to coordinate and agree different interests of people, determine specific tactical and strategic goals, and deal with the distribution of scarce values and benefits [5]. That implies the significance of conflicts in public administration. The hierarchical structure of managerial roles and statuses, which lays down the contradictions between managers and subordinates and generates the principle of inequality at the time of power

distribution among the participants of management itself, contributes to the inevitability of conflict manifestations.

Conflicts in the state and administrative spheres have various causes, manifestations and functions, both destructive and constructive. This is manifested in signaling conflicts of power and society about the existing contradictions that need to be resolved, about the disagreement of the opinions of citizens, about all the existing differing positions; force the authorities to revise their goals, decisions, course as a whole; encourage actions that can put the situation under tight control and overcome existing difficulties in the management process [6]. They also contribute to the search for the latest tools and forces that update the state system and its administrative apparatus, eliminating the outdated and obsolete and, thus, contributing to the development and adaptation of its mechanism to the latest, changing conditions.

One of the sources of state-administrative conflicts is the non-specific organization of the power mechanism and, accordingly, the non-specific separation of powers of various

state structures and civil servants. The problem of the lack of rotation system for existing personnel or their qualitative development and growth along the career ladder can also affect the emergence of serious friction, as well as the absence of arbitration or appeal bodies, procedures for clarifying different positions in opinions and approaches, as a result of which a conflict situation may get further aggravation [7]. Another source of conflict development is also highlighted - different opinions and positions of civil servants in determining basic values and political ideals, in assessing existing phenomena and events.

Communication is the most important factor in a crisis and at the same time an effective way out of it. The role of communication in a crisis has attracted the attention of many researchers [8]. It is worth noting that the Russian experience of effective communication in a crisis is not great and needs both theoretical understanding and practical modernization.

The public administration system, with all appearance of integrity as a structure, is characterized by functional fragmentation [9]. This is

determined by the fact that different state bodies, as well as different departments and administrations, fulfill a wide variety of goals and tasks, fulfilling their mission and being engaged in specific activities, which diverge as the competence and responsibility of the relevant entity.

The theory of conflict allows understanding the crisis as a natural, inevitable phenomenon, with its own internal dynamics and consequences. As a rule, in everyday consciousness, a crisis is associated only with negative consequences (losses, losses, etc.). Positive functions such as development, improvement of organizational norms and relations, integration and socialization, signal function are more often actualized in the scientific community. Mayres and Holoush highlight the following potential positive consequences of the crisis: birth of heroes, acceleration of changes, identification of hidden problems, changing people, development of new strategies, development of early warning systems, emergence of new competitive advantages [10].

The following seven steps can be distinguished in the structure of crisis management:

1 - continuous monitoring of the external and internal environment for the registration of the emergence of crisis manifestations. Monitoring of the state of key indicators makes the crisis potentially avoidable, reduces the degree of surprise and gives additional time for making effective management decisions. It is important that the key indicators are clearly developed taking into account the specific nature of the organization and experience;

2 - continuous implementation and improvement of preventive measures. The implementation of anti-crisis values, which include openness, trust, cooperation, positive leadership, responsibility. Preparing for a possible crisis, modeling a crisis, training personnel in crisis behavior. Stimulation of various informants;

3 - development of possible measures to overcome crisis emergencies (preparation of anti-crisis script);

4 - selection and correction of measures from the script in accordance

with the situation, adding new solutions not stipulated by the script (if any);

5 - implementation of measures to overcome the crisis (in case of its occurrence);

6 - quality control of the implementation of anti-crisis measures and changes due to the introduction of measures;

7 - correction of anti-crisis measures (if necessary) based on the analysis of data obtained at the previous stage;

7 - consolidation of positive practices, rejection of outdated and ineffective measures.

Crisis management in the government structures has features in the field of its technologies: reactivity and dynamism in interacting with resources; implementation of program-targeted approaches in the aspects of development and implementation of management decisions; high sensitivity to the time resource in leadership processes; increased attention to preliminary and subsequent evaluations of managerial decisions and choice of different approaches to behavior and actions. Anti-crisis communication of public authorities with the public and

staff shall be in constant focus. Here, a huge role belongs to the leader; he/she shall be the source of communication, the guarantor of trust, openness, cooperation and responsibility. It is the leader, manager, and not the press secretary, deputies, department heads, who have a decisive role in establishing effective communication.

In crisis management, it is recommended to pay special attention to the method of rationalizing the system of norms and legal regulators that improve the quality of the organization and remove the likely fire "spots" of a regulatory and institutional nature [11]. The primary role here is played by the cultural and political features of different countries.

4 Summary

The issue of finding ways to resolve conflict situations in the public administration has not always been of particular importance, although the state acts as a guarantor of stability and a symbol of order. The peculiarity of this search has always been within the framework of universal strategies of consensus and cooperation. Recently, the Institute of Public Administration has

devoted considerable efforts to technologies for monitoring and preventing the emergence of conflict situations, when the main emphasis is on preventive measures associated with the identification of conflict factors, their analysis and attempts to prevent the development of a potential conflict to a state of activity and openness [12].

The crisis management system in the state structures shall have special features: flexibility and adaptability, which are often inherent in the matrix management systems; desire to increase informal leadership; reduction of centralism to ensure timely regulation of the situation on emerging issues; strengthening of the unification processes [13].

In the public administration sphere, the conflict appears in a specific form of mutual interaction between institutions, organizations and social groups. The hierarchical structure of the state apparatus as a system, difference in managerial roles, differentiation of statuses and interests, as well as sociocultural, value and other disagreements of leadership subjects and objects inevitably give rise to conflict situations, predetermining the

corresponding feature of human behavior [14].

A significant source of conflict can also be found in management communication technologies, for example, in the lack or incorrectness of information or in the deliberate manipulation of it. Each distortion of information may well give rise to a conflict in the process of describing a typology of conflicts in the field of public administration. The highest state level uses great material opportunities, from here the most acute contradictions are created, disguised or not open to public opinion. Communication based on trust and cooperation, open and responsible leadership are necessary conditions for the effective functioning of government bodies both in a crisis period and before and after it.

5 Conclusions

In the process of resolving intra-organizational conflicts in the government structures, the rationalization method shall be paramount.

Intra-organizational conflicts in the government bodies do not have ambiguous differences from similar

conflicts in the private sector institutions by their nature. The main thing is as follows: a specific division of responsibilities and opportunities is inherent for the state structures in accordance with the norms and rules fixing a specific hierarchy of power. In this regard, the organization's activities are coordinated and foreseen. The possibility of structural rules drowns out and weakens the emerging source of stress. A large number of conflicts in the government organizations is rational. Since each structural department is always created for a specific purpose, often the goals and objectives of the created units (departments, administrations) can become opposite or even competing, since an objective opposition of goals may well lead to positional conflicts [15]. These are conflicts between various departments, which, in turn, are further divided into conflicts between representatives of the administration and specialists for increasing the possibility of influence in the organization, conflict situations between directly competing departments for the possibility of significant influence on the leadership, increasing their importance and status. And,

therefore, there are conflicts over methods and controls.

The tasks and goals of crisis management in the state structures are as follows: forecasting the crisis and appropriate preparation for it; obstruction of serious crisis factors; regulation of the crisis dynamics; implementation of the life and work of the organization in a crisis state; working with the factors and consequences of the crisis for the subsequent development of the organization.

6 Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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