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CONTENTS

SOCIETY, POLICY AND RELIGION

- Osipova N.G.** Religion and Society:
Differentiation and Diversification of Protestant Movements 165

THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN RUSSIA

- Astvatsaturova M.A.** 2020 Address: The Power-Meaningful
Message of Extrapolating the Vertical of Power..... 182
- Dubrovina O.V., Dubrovina O.Yu.** Global and Regional
in the Conditions of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Impact on Education..... 195

PROBLEMS OF EURASIAN AND POST-SOVIET COOPERATION

- Lukin A.D.** Northern Sea Route – Bridge Between the East
and the West: Prospects and Realities Development of the Trans-Arctic 202
- Marabyan K.P.** Russia’s Factor in Georgia’s Foreign Policy 207

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND WORLD POLITICS

- Rodionova M.E.** Gender Dimension of Political
Representation in Western Countries and Russia..... 216
- Jiachu Lian.** Space Exploration as a Factor of China’s Foreign Policy 225
- Lei Shuang.** White Paper: China’s Arctic Policy –
Present Strategy of the PRC in the Arctic 230
- Ndayisaba Augustine.** Great Lakes Region of Africa (GLR):
Collective Defence as an Appropriate Solution to the Problems
of the Non-Combat Capability of the Congolese Armed Forces 239

REFLECTIONS ON THE READ

- Medvedev N.P.** Afterword to the Article by M. L. Lebedeva
“French Regional Political Space: Conceptual and Theoretical Characteristics” 247

OUR AUTHORS..... 253

AUTHORS’ GUIDELINES 254

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2020 ADDRESS: THE POWER-MEANINGFUL MESSAGE OF EXTRAPOLATING THE VERTICAL OF POWER

*The article contains a political analysis of the problem-thematic trends of the modern political process, taking into account the risks and challenges of an economic, social, political and managerial nature. The article outlines main crisis aspects of politics in the context of the economic, financial crisis, as well as the coronavirus pandemic. Special attention is paid to the Russian segment of the global political crisis trend with an emphasis on the power and management factor in the context of the Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of January 2020. Some political and managerial imperatives of the President of the Russian Federation in their development since 2000 and their modern projections are studied. The author identifies and nominates such a power-significant message of the upper level as **extrapolation of the power vertical through its personification in the person of the President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin**. The objective and subjective determinants of this extrapolation are revealed in relation to the current problems of development of Russian society and the Russian state in connection with the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation in 1993. Extrapolation of the vertical of power through personalization of Russian President Vladimir Putin is seen as objectively caused, but the intermediate stage of the nationwide democratic trend, the legitimization of which took place in the 1993 Constitution, and the epitome of which, according to the author, is the strategic course of Russia's development as a democratic, legal and social state.*

Key words: global political crisis trend, “sovereign democracy”, 2020 Address, the President of the Russian Federation, power-meaningful message, “politicality” of decisions of the Federal government, Federal districts, the State Council of the Russian Federation, technological policy, extrapolation of the power vertical through its personification, amendments to the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation, preserving the nature of political technologies, the choice of citizens.

Leap context of the global political crisis trend. The year 2020 encourages many reflections of symbolic and fatalistic shades. This primarily concerns opinions about the combination of numbers and the magic of numbers, as well as the leap year filling, which, however, gave us the opportunity to use the extra day for the best possible purposes.

The 2020 milestone encourages all sorts of expert and project initiatives, the meaning of which is reinforced by modern risks that border on catastrophism. These include: the global economic and financial crisis, damage to social and political life, instability of political systems and regimes, and the decline in the power of the authorities and authority of the power [10]. Many previously created alliances and entanglements [1], which assumed the authority to resolve contradictions, prevent conflicts, and preserve peace, are being corroded and disintegrated everywhere [9]. Economic collapses and financial downturns provoke a lot of clear and vague forecasts, the professional qualification level of which is often inaccessible to ordinary citizens who are concerned with the falling living standards, lack of economic stability, and instability of social institutions.

The global situation is extremely burdened by the coronavirus pandemic, which, as expected, has pronounced social and political projections. The virus as a “Black Swan” has inevitably become a factor of politics and sociality, as well as geopolitics in the context of increasing interstate, inter-social and intra-social competition. Sharp discussions of ideologies and ideological and worldview programs of liberals, conservatives, democrats, monarchists, nationalists, environmentalists, etc. in the literal sense often acquire a toxic viral hue. Probably, efforts are needed to understand the phenomenon of a **global political** (but, we hope, not apocalyptic) **crisis trend**, that would syncretize the plots of power, politics, elites, ideologies with the plots of public states, moods, fears and expectations.

All these obvious factors, as well as those that are fortunately unknown, bring to the forefront expert, public, and informational assessments the problem of the strength of political institutions, government institutions, and civil society. They suffer noticeable damage and, for sure, will be transformed into the “viral and post-viral reality.” The public arenas and sidelines of the global crisis political trend show that its leading stories are the stories of the viability of political and economic systems, the adequacy of national leaders.

The prime theme is the sovereignty of states if we interpret it as self-sufficiency and synergy in an ever-expanding spectrum. As the world processes of 2019-2020 have shown, the sovereignty of states includes not only self-sufficiency and synergy of economy, politics, law, demography, sociality, culture, ideology, and worldview. Self-sufficiency and synergy of health systems, social protection, and epidemiology have been significantly updated in countries. There is also an urgent need for self-sufficiency and synergy of elites, in the sanity and adequacy of citizens, who are markedly differentiated by nation-states (Great Britain, Italy, Spain, China, the United States, Sweden, etc.).

The Russian segment of the global political crisis trend. The Russian segment of the global political crisis trend has an independent significance in all its problem-thematic areas. Among them, such as the reliability of political and managerial strategies and tactics of the Russian leadership, as well as their adaptability to the negative-dynamic realities and geopolitical threats of our time [13].

It should be emphasized that the federal top of the Russian political class not only applies to economic, social, and political risks, but also has a clear influence on their content, course, and forms. The Russian political and administrative elite impressively affects the global crisis political trend in connection with such convincing arguments as territory, demography, natural resources, the military-industrial complex, as well as the ministerialitarian patriotism of Russians. It is also advisable to highlight a special Russian algorithm of relations between the state and society based on rational and irrational etatism [28; 6] and bureaucratization of public life [14]. The Russian pyramid model of power organization, which meets the social order of the society majority in the conditions of internal and external risks, is very symbolic and at the same time realistic. The Russian nation, with its colossal socio-cultural potential and the highest socio-existential stability, traditionally sees the key to stability and well-being in a personified “strong hand.”

Today, in the Russian segment of the global political crisis trend, the President of the Russian Federation is viewed as a frontman with high essential and functional qualifications. Vladimir Putin’s political assets meet the needs of the majority of citizens, who consider strong President as a guarantor of the country’s sovereignty and indivisibility, protection of Russia’s historical and cultural heritage, and preservation of Russia’s “spiritual bonds.” The citizens directly link the activities of the Russian President as the Supreme Commander with the military and political power of Russia, traditionally identified with their own well-being [24. P. 134-149] and preservation of the society from the internal schisms and upheavals. In this sense, citizens understand the President’s theses that “*it will be bad in Russia without a strong presidential power due to the lack of stable political parties,*” which “*have been growing in Europe for centuries*” [5].

The growth of the modality of V. V. Putin’s presidential political and managerial assets, have been convincingly manifested during the global crisis political trend, which can be traced back to the 2000s. V. V. Putin’s political and managerial initiatives, despite their apparent simplicity, national character and democracy, make a logical and rigid political and managerial scheme that has been successfully implemented. In this scheme, we will highlight actions that have long-term consequences in modern times because of their “political character.”

Formation of Federal districts. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated May 13, 2000 No. 849 “**On the formation of Federal districts**” became an act of political will of the head of state aimed at forming a modern stable management system [12]. It should be noted that despite its innovative na-

ture the decree and efforts behind it continued the attempts by the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin to create in Russia a political and managerial network personified by the President's representatives in the federal districts. The desire of the federal center to "pull together" and structure Russian political and administrative space was caused by the imbalance of power, disagreements between the center and the regions, and the weakness of the legal framework and law enforcement institutions.

Legitimacy of formation of the Federal districts is supported by Articles 78 and 83 of the Russian Constitution, providing for the right of the President of the Russian Federation to appoint and dismiss plenipotentiary representatives and the right of federal bodies of executive power to create their own territorial organs and appoint corresponding officials. The "political meaning" of creating a district system of representative offices of the President of the Russian Federation consists in: restoring the constitutional order; eliminating political and managerial risks of relations between the center and the regions; strengthening the federal presence in the regions. The institute of presidential envoys in the federal districts has developed empirically while determining the optimal forms of policy and management at the federal district level. As Vladimir Putin noted, *"the essence of this decision is not to consolidate regions, as it is sometimes perceived or presented, but to consolidate the structures of the presidential vertical in the territories. Not in the restructuring of administrative and territorial borders, but in improving the efficiency of government. Not in weakening regional power, but in creating conditions for strengthening federalism. With the creation of districts, the federal government did not move away, but moved closer to the territories. This decision, of course, cements the unity of the country"* [19].

Despite the high ratings of the President of the Russian Federation, it is not necessary to idealize the system of representations of the President of the Russian Federation in the federal districts, as well as the role of the presidential envoys. In different federal districts, we see different manifestations of the bureaucracy of the new administrative institution, its detachment from the social order and its closeness to regional communities, lack of understanding by the high-level officials of the socio-cultural and ethno-cultural specifics of the population, the permanent or frequent replacement of presidential envoys, etc.

However, noting the problems, it is worth emphasizing that the political projections of this system became clear at the end of the confrontational stage of the development of relations between the center and the regions in a new system of legal, political and organizational coordinates. Contractual relations between the federal center and the Russian Federation's regions have been optimized on a single political platform [8. P. 9-37]. The "politicality" of the efforts of the presidential envoys was expressed in such political and managerial algorithms as: conducting the political course of the head of state in the regions; implementing

the principles of personnel policy of the President of the Russian Federation on the basis of personal loyalty and personal responsibility to the head of state.

Representatives of the Russian President in the federal districts not only as officials but as persons of the political establishment provide a mediation between the federal bodies of state power and bodies of state power of subjects of the Russian Federation, between the elites in the subjects of the Russian Federation. The personnel pool of the head of state's plenipotentiaries in the federal districts ensured the revival of regional political institutions, vertical and horizontal processes and technologies, as well as a network basis. There are reference groups of experts, activists, and professionals who are loyal to the government and support the initiatives of the presidential envoys in the federal districts. Also, throughout the federal districts, platforms for public policy, socially responsible business, social activism and socially useful services, and volunteerism (unions, forums, councils, and youth camps) are organized under the direct patronage of presidential envoys. The new actualization of presidential envoys in the federal districts is dictated by the need to observe a special regime for the functioning of government bodies and the life of regional communities in the context of a pandemic.

Creation of the State Council of the Russian Federation. Among the important institutional innovations of the federal center we would like to highlight is the establishment of the State Council of the Russian Federation by Presidential Decree of September 1, 2000 № 1602 [26] that correlated with the new order of formation of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, legitimised on 26 July 2000 in the Federal Law *“On the procedure of forming the Federation Council.”*

The need to create a new body is dictated by the multi-component structure of the Russian Federation, asymmetric Russian federalism and “ethno-politism.” If the Subjects of the Russian Federation are equal, they retain their different status, enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, primarily by declaring the status of the Republics of the Russian Federation as states within it. The status of the Republic forms a multidimensional complex of political, legal, socio-economic, cultural and linguistic preferences [17]. The sovereignty of republics is often perceived as the priority of the corresponding titular people (or titular peoples), although the Republican state equally belongs to all the inhabitants of the republics, regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation [3].

Based on the 1992 Federal Treaty and the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Treaty-constitutional Russian federalism has demonstrated not only its risks, but also its high viability. At the same time, relations between the center and the regions (budget-investment, transfer, power-organizational) remain complex. There is also a competitive relationship between the subjects of the Russian Federation in defending economic, social, infrastructural, ethnopolitical, ethno-cultural, and territorial interests. Such competition has objective determinants, political and legal conditionality, as well as a subjective nature.

The State Council of the Russian Federation is the platform for clarifying the positions of regions and for political dialogue of the heads of subjects in the overall transparency of the presidential political course in the country. Essentially and structurally, the State Council of the Russian Federation is related to the management system in the Federal districts of the Russian Federation, since it includes the Presidium comprising eight representatives of the Federal districts of the Russian Federation.

In the context of the author's interest, we emphasize that the meaning of the activities of the State Council of the Russian Federation is interpreted by the country's leadership as politically significant, in contrast to the activities of other Federal authorities. However, the "political" function of the State Council of the Russian Federation does not correspond to the political process in its classical sense, primarily because the modern Russian political process is limited by the framework of "sovereign democracy" [25]. We view the sovereign democracy in the Russian Federation in its limitations, framework, nationalization, the lack of independence of the party and political elite, the obscurity of the party design, the weakness of civil society, the neutrality of the political culture of citizens and the formality of their electoral choice. Therefore, the "politicality" of the State Council of the Russian Federation is realized in the absence of political competition and struggle for the electorate, as well as in the absence of functional opposition, etc.

In this regard, in our opinion, the "political ratification" of the State Council of the Russian Federation is manifested primarily in the optimization of relations between the Federal center and the subjects, in the implementation of political techniques and technologies for centralizing the personnel policy of the President of the Russian Federation, in the verticalization of power and the discipline of its actors.

The power-significant message of the 2020 Address. In the context of the above, it is advisable to consider the Address of the President of the Russian Federation of January 15, 2020 as a legitimate and justified act that has grown the legal, political and doctrinal programming of politics and management not so much as institutions and processes, but as the most important conditions and factors for the stability of the state and society. There are opinions that amendments to the Constitution proposed by the President of the Russian Federation is an outright "constitutional reform", firstly, changing not only the text of the basic document of the country, but its public perception, and also the spirit of the Constitution of the Russian Federation [22; 23], second, as having "bottlenecks" in their content and implementation mechanisms [2].

In our opinion, the reformist nature of the 2020 Address is that it prolongs the inertia of the political system, the manageability of the political regime and the program of subjectification of the political elite of the Russian Federation in the consolidation of the presidential Republic. The 2020 Address has a pronounced conservative and conserving orientation. It is not intended to modernize the existing political system and regime of politics and management, but to spread and preserve its legal and organizational foundations and subject-actor projections.

The 2020 Address as a document of high political technology is aimed not only at improving the standard of living of the population and the stability of the Russian socio-economic and foreign policy dynamics. The 2020 Address also provides for the **extrapolation of the power vertical through its personification** to all levels of politics, management, as well as self-government and civil self-organization. This, as it seems to us, is the powerfully significant message of the 2020 Address, which has revived the modern Russian stagnant political process.

Discussion of amendments proposed by the President of the Russian Federation to the Constitution of the Russian Federation in the State Duma, the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, in regional legislative bodies as well as expert and civil environment ensured to the power-significant promise of the 2020 Address a wide resonance. The objective, but also controlled algorithm of this resonance predetermined the **extrapolation of the vertical of power through its personification in the person of the current President of the Russian Federation**.

The constitutional initiatives of the President, as well as subsequent ideas of the deputies of the State Duma, of the citizens of Russia, provide for the consolidation of personalistic regime of Vladimir Putin on the basis of the “Putin’s doctrine” [20]. It declares the self-sufficiency of Russia’s geopolitical subjectivation, the independence of its political elite, and the self-worth of its history and culture [4]. The core idea of the “Putin’s doctrine” is the readiness and ability of the Russian state not only to respond to modern challenges, but also to powerfully influence the international architecture. These positions are again confirmed in the 2020 Address by the President of the Russian Federation, who successfully correlated the fundamental vital interests of Russians with the foreign policy interests of Russia as an influential subject of the international law.

Extrapolation of the power vertical through its personalization in the activities of V. V. Putin in the context of geopolitical, economic, financial, environmental, epidemiological and other challenges seems to the majority of Russian citizens not only justified, but also appropriate. The motives of citizens’ loyalty are largely determined by the social Russian sanity. Citizens have a rich experience of past catastrophes (the collapse of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the socialist system, conflicts, price increases, repeated depreciation of monetary savings). The delegation of many powers by Russian citizens to the state in the person of its head is often based on fears of an even more threatening development of events (“if only it were not worse,” “if only there was no war,” “if only there was peace”). Citizens strive to stabilize the situation by available means in contrast to numerous dangers (economic crisis, collapse of the national currency, depreciation of savings, hostile environment, coronavirus pandemic). Observing the political impersonality of modern Russian parties, disillusioned with the personalities of the party-political process, tired of the failed promises and programs of the political elite, fearing foreign policy damage, citizens remain loyal not to the

political system and political regime, but to their state, referring it to the President of the Russian Federation.

Numerous risks and threats of recent years have catalyzed the growing servility of the population towards the state, power and the President of the Russian Federation. The political positioning of the population is motivated by an almost non-competitive public-political environment, and the absence of real alternative candidates who could form a constructive competition with Vladimir Putin. This lack of alternative is projected in the belief that only the current President of the Russian Federation will be able to ensure the integrity of the country, the development of its economy, and relative stability (which since 2012 by many indicators is correlated with stagnation). The current President of the Russian Federation in the opinion of the population is the guarantor of the preservation of Russia as a sovereign power with an indivisible territory, independent legislation, and unchangeable history [27; 21]. Opinion polls show that citizens of the Russian Federation trust the President of the Russian Federation as the initiator of national projects to improve the living standards and programs to combat poverty and social disadvantage, the initiator of amendments to the basic law of the country [7]. This confidence is growing in the face of global economic and financial catastrophes, as well as the COVID-2019 pandemic. *“And the key point is not even the content of the amendments, but the fact that a major political event is taking place in the country and citizens are invited to express their opinions”* [11].

Some conclusions and forecasts of possible events. Extrapolation of the power vertical through its personalization in the person of the President of the Russian Federation in modern Russia is due to the need to solve unusual problems in unusual conditions. However, it must be supported by sustainable economic development and stabilization of the financial system, an increase in the standard of living of the population, an effective social infrastructure, and the availability of social elevators. That is why the power-significant message of the 2020 Address through extrapolation of the power vertical is largely aimed at reassuring the people by providing macroeconomic and fiscal stability, price stabilization, creation of “safety cushion,” preservation and increment of the population, achievement of higher living standards.

Accordingly, implementation of the President’s proposals should help to realize the social character of the Russian state, spelled out in the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation which, however, is largely not provided for. In this sense, we note again the politically technological character of the 2020 Address, in which the President of the Russian Federation supports the possibility of social adaptation of the population to the present day challenges not only through intensive diversification of the social obligations of the state but also through the inertia of the population’s national loyalty to the authorities and personalities.

Naturally, the identification of the state with the person of the President of the Russian Federation as a national leader is growing in public opinion. Propaganda

slogans about the correlation of V. V. Putin and Russia, V. V. Putin and the political system are clear in the general extrapolation of the power vertical through its personification in the person of the current President of the Russian Federation. The ideas of reference persons of the public-political process (V. Volodin, V. Zhirinovsky, V. Matvienko, V. Tereshkova) about V. V. Putin as the main advantage of Russia have a frontal character. These ideas, advanced in the proposal to extend the term of Vladimir Putin's presidential term by "nullifying" it, are supported by the majority of the country's citizens, ready to vote for the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, primarily due to their confidence in the President of the Russian Federation.

Personalization of an individual as an embodiment of the system, as an embodiment of the country and power has already occurred many times in the history of Russia. Such personalization was embodied in the Russian public-political process as the unity of "the autocrat and people," "party and people," "leader and people". It is explained by the crisis situations, threats and unfavorable forecasts, but also by the Russian identification system itself, typical Russian civil indifference, and the indifference of the majority of the population to the principles of democracy, even sovereign democracy.

Nevertheless, the thesis about the identity of Russia and the President of the Russian Federation, Russia and V. V. Putin, V. V. Putin and the Russian state contains known drawbacks as any identification of this kind. In addition, extrapolation of the power vertical through its personalization has a chronological framework determined by the challenges of the situation. Inertial expansion and multiplication of such frameworks, as Russian and world practice shows, often have negative consequences.

Extrapolation of the vertical of power through its personalization as a political technology can be analytically justified and methodologically explained in the paradigm of political knowledge, as well as in political practice. However, in its practical application to the Russian Federation, we consider it as a stage technology in the outline of the general Russian democratic process, which was legitimized in the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation. The President of the Russian Federation stressed that its potential is *"far from being exhausted, the fundamental foundations of the constitutional system and human rights and freedoms will, I hope, remain a solid value base for the Russian society for many decades to come"* [16].

V. V. Putin has repeatedly pointed out the importance of preserving the democratic principles of the dynamics of Russian society (human rights, changes in power, alternative elections, civic activism, volunteerism, public control, conciliation procedures, etc.). President of the Russian Federation also noted the need for the functioning of the opposition in the country and *"creating conditions for a person of any views, whatever they are, to be able to work effectively"* [18].

Russian citizens have acquired many skills of free democratic social creativity, civic activism, and volunteerism. In this regard, “*we can build a strong, prosperous, modern Russia only on the basis of unconditional respect for the opinion of the people*” [16].

It is natural that public and political support of citizens for the power-relevant message of the 2020 Address as an extrapolation of the power vertical through its personification is carried out precisely within the framework of recognized and legitimate democratic political technologies and technologies of civil self-government. They are fixed in the Constitution of the Russian Federation and in the modern slogan: “**Our country, our Constitution, our decision!**” with the indisputable democratic content.

In this regard, it seems to us that in the Russian system of relations between the state and society, the defining strategy is to preserve and develop the general democratic content of the government function and the function of citizens on the basis of mutual obligations and control, social contract and responsibility, contractual principles and optimal Russian implementation of democracy.

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