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Open Governance, Based on the Principles of Accountability and Transparency, as the Foundation of a Democratic Society on the Example of the Public Sector of Georgia

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Abstract

Transparency and openness are one of the mechanisms for implementing good governance. Both of them help create conditions for citizens to evaluate the decisions that the government makes on their behalf. Transparency and citizen participation also ensure that citizens' needs are met and that their positions are taken into account in the decision-making process. Effective transparency and engagement help to eradicate corruption and government malfeasance. At the same time, through transparency and engagement, citizens' trust can be increased. Transparency and engagement also ensure better decision-making by the government and more efficient delivery of public services (Radin, 2006). The relevance of the issue is emphasized by the fact that accountability and transparency represent an important valuable principle that increases the degree of legitimacy of the civil sector and, naturally, affects the effectiveness of the development of public organizations (Walker, 2002). Due to the fact that the accountability of public organizations with donors is regulated by the contracts signed between them, and the accountability with the state is regulated by legislation, special attention was paid to the accountability and transparency of the sector in relation to the public. It is recognized that in order to achieve a high degree of legitimacy of the sector, it is important to raise awareness of public organizations, increase public trust in them and create a positive

image (Schedler, 2002,7-16).

Keywords: Public administration; good governance; open governance; the principle of accountability; the principle of transparency; public sector

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Georgia has made significant progress in terms of good governance and transparency reforms. International studies also reveal that the country has effectively dealt with the fight against petty corruption and currently continues to implement the necessary reforms to eliminate high-level corruption, which contributes to the consolidation and strengthening of democratic systems. In this process, the involvement of local municipalities, their efforts, active participation and sharing of experience with local civil servants and decision-makers is of the utmost importance.

Research objectives

What is open government?

What does the principle of accountability mean?

How is transparency introduced and implemented in the public sector?

What does good governance involve?

Which principles determine the implementation of the foundation of democracy?

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to study open governance, based on the principles of accountability and transparency, as the foundation of a democratic society on the example of the public sector of Georgia.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical foundations of organization building, as part of the general science of management, are based on various fields of knowledge - management, sociology, anthropology, psychology, jurisprudence, etc. Changes in the objective conditions of the organization's functioning, which were characteristic of the 20th century, brought many innovations to the development of viewpoints, scientific concepts and management practices. The expansion of organizations, the separation of management from property, the development of exact sciences and science about people became the basis for the scientific study of organizations, their management methods and principles. This gave life to many scientific ideas and schools, which studied the regularities of the construction of organizations, their main

characteristics and incentives for functioning; In particular, formal and informal organizations, human relations, social systems, distribution of functions and responsibilities, management decisions (Walker,2002)

A particularly important feature of the management theory is the existence of goals, to the achievement of which it is directed. Management arises precisely because people want to achieve certain goals, satisfy certain needs, get the necessary results. Based on one's own goals, desires, aspirations, a person organizes the actions and processes of other people in order to fulfill the set goal. This is management, which is often called purposeful management (Przeworski,1986).

The foundations of a democratic society

A democratic society, where the main principles of public administration are accountability and transparency, is a society in which each member enjoys equal rights and freedoms before the law. (Dahl, 2014). It is characterized by the real participation of the people in the formation of the government, the legal regulation of wide socio-economic and political rights and freedoms of citizens, the existence of real constitutional guarantees of their implementation.

The principle of transparency

In the modern world, for the development of public administration and the efficient operation of the public sector, the principle of transparency is necessary to ensure that those who are directly affected by the decisions made by public institutions have comprehensive information about the results of individual policies, as well as the processes by which these decisions are made (Crook, 2007). Access to public information about government policies, programs, and activities enables citizens and local communities to have a clear understanding of government activities, make informed choices, and further engage in local decision-making. Also, the principle of transparency enables elected officials, members of the government and the opposition to make informed decisions, exercise effective control and hold the government accountable for their actions. In addition, access to information is important for journalists and civil society representatives to effectively exercise oversight functions and hold government accountable (Schmitter, 2006)

Local authorities should ensure that information is available in an accessible format and delivered to the public in a timely manner. When discussing the issue of access to public information, the importance of open data should also be clearly emphasized (Schmitter, 2006, 47). This enables citizens and stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process from an informed position and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of

government policies and decisions to hold public officials accountable for their actions. Transparency is achieved through a series of mechanisms based on citizens' right of access to information. This includes a system for high officials and elected officials to declare assets and publish information in accessible and open data formats (Przeworski, 1986)

To analyze the principle of openness

Restricting access to public information has a negative impact on public trust in public institutions, increases potential corruption risks, and limits monitoring of government activities by various interested parties. It also hinders the efforts of citizens and stakeholders to participate in policy making and the ability to develop evidence-based recommendations for positive change. Practice proves that the existence of the legal framework for access to information and mechanisms for its proper enforcement is a critical component of creating an environment of access to information for citizens (Schedler, 2011).

Public procurement is considered one of the most vulnerable areas to corruption. It accounts for about 10% of global gross domestic product, and in high-income countries the purchase of goods and services accounts for a third of total government spending. Thus, public procurement is an important area for the spread of corruption, secret deals and other illegal practices (Boulder, 2019, 84-88). To avoid corruption risks related to public procurement, as well as for procurement tender procedures, public agencies often use electronic means and platforms based on the principle of open data. Along with open contracting (where tenders and contracts are made public), increasing the accessibility of the procurement process allows more stakeholders to participate and reduces the possibility of anti-competitive practices and bribery (Weissman, 2017).

Another important component of transparency is the openness of political parties and election campaign financing, as it is essential for voters to make informed decisions about where the available resources come from and how they are spent, and which financial, political or other interests support specific candidates or parties. Transparency of political donations has a preventive nature against illegal income in elections and politics (Radin, 2006).

For the improvement of good governance

Implementation of good governance standards at the local level is one of the important components of Georgia's decentralization strategy. The third strategic goal of the document - the establishment of reliable, accountable, transparent and results-oriented local self-government - includes the following important tasks:

- Implementation of effective and innovative systems of management and quality service delivery at the local level;
- Implementation of a high standard of transparency and accountability;
- promotion of high-quality involvement in the process of decision-making and implementation by the local self-government;
- Creation of local development planning and coordination system (Radin, 2006, 21-24).

In addition, the strengthening of local self-government is one of the tasks of the public administration reform, which is also in line with the Georgia-EU association agenda.

In recent years, local municipalities have been actively involved in various local and international good governance initiatives. In particular, several municipalities joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and undertook various commitments within the framework of the National Action Plan. In addition, since 2016, Tbilisi City Hall has been implementing its own open governance partnership action plans within the framework of the OGP local program. Additionally, in 2020, three municipalities - Akhaltsikhe, Khoni and Ozurgeti - joined the OGP Local Program, which also committed to developing their first Open Government Partnership Action Plans. In addition, since 2015, the anti-corruption priorities and measures of municipalities have been determined by the National Anti-Corruption Strategy of Georgia. In particular, the 2019-2020 anti-corruption strategy and its action plan, among other commitments, aim to strengthen the principles of honesty, openness, accountability and transparency in municipalities. For this purpose, the action plan establishes the development of strategies and activities that serve to improve the principles of good governance in the country (Dahl., 2004).

Standards of access to information

Access to information facilitates accountability, government control and corruption monitoring. Access to information is of great importance in terms of ensuring the informed participation of citizens in the decision-making process, therefore, it is fundamental for the effective functioning of democracy. Freedom of information strengthens civil society in monitoring and controlling local government. Access to information serves to prevent abuse of power by public officials and enable informed public debate (Weissman, 2007).

Proactive publication of the maximum amount of information in the most accessible formats serves to reduce the need for citizens and interested parties to submit individual requests for information. In addition to publishing as much information as possible electronically, local governments

should prioritize the appointment of Freedom of Information Officers in municipalities. Officers should prepare and publish detailed recommendations to both citizens and local authorities, including the appeals process if requests for information are not met. It is also important to analyze the information requests of citizens and stakeholders, especially to identify trends and duplications, so that the authorities can then provide such information proactively (Crook, 2007).

Management theories

Table 1. Main factors affecting management theories

Systematic approach to management;
organizational potential and culture;
behaviorism; - marketing;
reengineering;
the concept of the internal market;
Theory of institutions and institutional changes;
theory of alliances;
Priority of social goals and development.

Source: Walker, 2002.

F. Taylor was one of the first to analyze the organizational aspects of management. Taylor and his followers. The ideas and methods that stem from Taylor's research are known as scientific management, which centers on the work that is done in the lower ring. Studies on the theory of self-organization were conducted in 1890-1941. With the development of scientific studies of management, the focus of researchers' attention was on the whole organization, and not on the work performed by individual members or links of the organization. Principles of organization, criteria for establishing organizational structures, principles for creating a system of subdivisions, principles for determining manageability, delegating rights and responsibilities were developed. An important role in the development of the classical theory was played by the development of the bureaucratic theory, the foundations of which are given in the works of Max Weber. Let's take a closer look at each of the key parts of the classic theory of organization (Tsai,2007).

Legal framework

Article 18 of the Constitution of Georgia states that every citizen of Georgia has the right to access official documents stored in public institutions, if they do not contain confidential, personal or commercial information. Chapter III of the General Administrative Code of Georgia establishes procedures for requesting information from public institutions

(both central and municipal agencies). According to the Code, public information must be provided immediately or no later than 10 calendar days - in cases where its retrieval requires additional efforts. If a request for information is refused, individuals have the right to appeal the decision within the organization and then in court within 30 days of the decision (Walker, 2002).

Since 2013, central and municipal public institutions have adopted procedures and regulations for proactive publication of public information and established a list of mandatory information to be published on the institution's website, which is updated periodically (Schedler, 2011).

Conclusion

When talking about the modern state, it is important to know how and based on what principles it is governed. First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of "state" and "authority". The first of them represents a political organization that has sovereignty over a specific territory and its people, while the government is an institution that creates and enforces laws within the state, implements domestic and foreign policies, and monitors the strict observance of laws and human rights in the state.

It is important to say that in order to implement and protect the principles of transparency, to use state resources economically, efficiently and effectively, it is necessary to ensure the independence and development of institutional capabilities of the body responsible for external audit. In addition, the general public should be given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the reports prepared by the auditor and the main recommendations. The role of external audit is critical in identifying key challenges in the public sector, improving the performance of public institutions - their transparency, and developing evidence-based policies.

In conclusion, to summarize the discussed issue, it should be emphasized that Under the Transparency and Accountability Initiative, government and public officials, managers, directors and board members of companies and organizations are required to act in an open, expected and understandable way, and to promote participation and accountability. Security sector institutions provide security for public consumption. The quality of such services is inevitably affected by the transparency and accountability of security service providers, both in relation to the service itself and in relation to the process. Therefore, relevant policy and resource information should be publicly available. This could be the annual report of the Department of Defense or the White Paper on Defense and Security, the release of the annual budget, etc.

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