

Encouraging Citizen Adoption of E-Governance – A Way to Reduce Corruption

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Abstract—The transformation of modern public administration is based on the introduction of transparent, with wide public participation management practices. Innovative technologies imply new forms of citizen participation in government. This applies to all areas even the rulemaking sphere. Modern technologies in general, and the “electronic participation” of citizens in managing the affairs of the state and regions in particular, contribute to the openness of state power, its legitimization, and the reduction of corruption. The involvement of citizens in management issues can be considered one of the factors to reduce corruption. The maturity of e-government significantly contributes to the fight against corruption. The functioning of new services is based on the principles of transparency, simplicity, wide participation of citizens in the affairs of a region / territory / country. E-government is an effective anti-corruption instrument. Services provided by the state mainly in electronic form are interconnected with anti-corruption indicators and positively affect the transparency of state power and trust in the government. The same effect has platforms for communicating with citizens and identifying their opinions and problems, the presence of state bodies in social networks.

Keywords—*electronic participation, e-participation, co-leadership, co-management, transparency, openness, digital technologies*

I. INTRODUCTION

State bureaucracy have led to the search for alternative ways of organizing public administration, revising the role of the state in society. One of such ways is to accept the involvement of citizens in management, which is especially effective at the local level (where local authorities act as agents of people living in the territory to protect individual and public interests).

The request for the modernization of the existing methods of state and municipal administration received an answer-

solution, including the use of modern technologies. And expressed himself in such phenomena as “electronic government”, “digital state”, “smart city”, etc.

Modern public administration takes on a new form, which is usually name as "E-governance". In the literature, it is interpreted as a form of new public administration with the help of information and communication technologies, focused on the efficient, quick and transparent provision of information to citizens, as well as public authorities to ensure the successful functioning of the state [1].

The development of E-governance leads to political modernization in the country. In particular, open data has a positive effect on confidence in the government, as it increases its transparency. Electronic participation ultimately affects the level of freedom in a country.

E-governance emphatically offers mechanisms for involving civil society in public administration. Modern e-democracy is a way to give every person an equal chance to influence a political decision, its result. The main distinguishing feature of modern democracies is the increasing role of citizens in solving common affairs, problems, and managing the state as a whole, including in the sphere of monitoring the exercise of powers by state and municipal authorities.

All this happens due to the creation of Internet resources that host information on the activities of state bodies, the connection of special applications, the participation of state bodies in social networks and the creation of special platforms for receiving information and ideas from citizens.

Some countries and individual cities have long been actively introducing such innovative solutions and, thereby, many times increase the efficiency of the governing bodies and the level of trust of citizens in them. The main principles of the above

technologies are openness, accessibility, swiftness (instantness).

Electronic monitoring carried out by citizens (even if it is presented in the form of positive / negative reviews about the completion of services) is noted by various authors as “monitoring of public services” and “policy evaluation in action” [2].

The hypothesis of this study is that modern technologies as a whole, the “electronic participation” of citizens in managing the affairs of the state and regions contribute to the openness of state power, its legitimization, and the reduction of corruption. The involvement of citizens in governance can be considered one of the factors for reducing corruption, the maturity of e-government significantly contributes to the fight against corruption.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In foreign literature, the concept of joint leadership / management has evolved since the late 1970s [3]. In recent years, it has been rethought in connection with modern technologies and established practices.

The results of the work of “smart cities” are actively investigated in the literature [4], especially since the obtained empirical data can change / supplement the results of theoretical studies.

An increasing number of studies tout e-government as an effective tool in fighting corruption and increasing transparency in developing countries [5].

It should be recognized that works on the relationship of joint leadership and reducing corruption are not enough. As a rule, authors limit themselves to indicating that electronic participation must necessarily lead to a reduction in corruption. It should be noted the work on the study of the anti-corruption effect of e-government Taewoo Nam [6]. The author, in particular, rightly believes that the research gap lies in the lack of empirical research on the cultural impact of the anti-corruption effects of e-government-based openness and transparency efforts, compared to the extensive literature on cultural relations and corruption [7].

There are works on how social media affect society, including reducing corruption at the country level [8].

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The object of the study is the relationship associated with the implementation of information technology in public administration, digitalization of the state, the so-called “Electronic state”. The subject is the involvement of citizens in public administration processes (the so-called “electronic participation”).

The purpose of the article is to emphasize the importance of using the tools of modern e-democracy and to indicate the effect of their use in terms of reducing corruption, improving the quality of services and their effectiveness, improving public opinion, and cutting budget expenditures.

In accordance with the object, the methods for studying the problem were also chosen.

The general dialectical method of cognition, as well as such general scientific methods as analysis and synthesis, were

chosen as the methodological basis. In the work, private scientific methods are used: formal-logical, system-structural, formal-legal methods.

In addition, the authors rely on the theory of modernization, which focuses on political education, economic growth and technological progress.

IV. RESULTS

Electronic participation is the highest form of interaction between citizens and the government. It replaces the bilateral interaction initiated by the government (advisory). It differs in what may come from the citizens themselves. A gradual increase in citizen participation in government takes place with the development of technology. Sæbø, Rose and Flak define electronic participation as the transformation of participation in consultative processes through technologies mediation [9].

Open government initiatives, efforts to ensure transparency have become a widespread trend. The introduction of e-government will help increase transparency and disclosure of information, increase transparency of government work. E-government helps to ensure that public affairs become public, transparent, reduce or minimize corruption. Meanwhile, the traditional conditions of a particular country, political and economic factors, have a decisive influence on the level of corruption.

Corruption is a universal and pathological phenomenon. It is a problem that has dominated in recent years in many countries including Russia.

The world is actively fighting against all manifestations of corruption. This is largely due to the destructive nature of this phenomenon, which internally destroys political institutions, significantly reducing their effectiveness. As a result of this process, the state loses the trust of citizens, ceases to fulfill its functions.

As part of the fight against corruption, state administrations are developing anti-corruption legislation, increasing the legal literacy of the population, and striving to identify and eliminate possible determinants of corruption.

As part of the fight against corruption, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation annually conducts a sociological survey on assessing the effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures used to prevent and prevent corruption. The last such study was conducted in March 2019 and covered 38 thousand respondents. Of greatest interest are the answers about the most effective measures in the fight against corruption: 24,339 people said that they should include “Strengthening the transparency of officials, increasing the accountability of officials and their accountability to the population,” and 23,671 people felt that “Strengthening distribution control and budget spending” [10]. The most corrupt areas were named: state and municipal property, state and municipal government, law enforcement system, housing and communal services and state / municipal services.

The less “transparent” the sphere, the more susceptible to corruption, from the point of view of citizens. Recently, many government agencies have shown a high level of “closeness”: information posted on official websites cannot be verified; a high level of bureaucracy and an incomprehensible document management system; reporting is formal. Such practice leads to

destabilization of power, loss of trust and requires special actions to change the current situation.

The transformation of the state in the context of active digitalization makes its changes in ways to overcome corruption.

Gradually, the concept of “e-democracy” – “electronic democracy” has developed in the scientific field. This term refers to the most advanced form of interaction between society and the state, through the use of digital technology. In the context of e-democracy, the role of representative institutions and organizations is being called into question[11]. E-democracy is the final product resulting from the formation of a sustainable digital government, which is carried out in 4 stages: informing, interacting, transactions and transforming the public administration system. Within the first two, citizens are informed about the activities of state bodies, communication with them is possible by e-mail, and all templates can be found on Internet platforms. The third stage is associated with user authentication and the execution of most of the processes online. As a result of the fourth stage, a single access point is created and anyone who wishes can take part in the exercise of their powers by state bodies. The created digital government will conduct an open dialogue with citizens, find out, and solve the issues that concern them most. Thus, public control over the activities of state and municipal bodies is strengthened, the possibility of corruption in these conditions is reduced.

At the moment, Russia is between the second and third stages of the formation of a digital government. In our opinion, an increase in the involvement of citizens in the process of government should be gradual. It is necessary to transform those areas that citizens consider the most corrupt: that is, public services, as well as housing and communal services. At the regional level, digital platforms should be created through which any resident of the territory can get acquainted with the activities of regional authorities, as well as contact directly, excluding intermediaries and personal visits to the authorities.

A similar experience is already present in a number of constituent entities of the Russian Federation. So, in St. Petersburg there are electronic reception rooms, a portal of state and municipal services, a portal of appeals “Our Petersburg”. In a survey of 600 respondents, more than half rated their experience with these digital platforms as positive [12]. Since 2011, in Moscow, the city has had a geographic information portal called “Our City”, which allows citizens to turn to the responsible authority with their problems. Ease of use has become one of the key advantages of the portal: registration can be done through social networks, and the response time from executive authorities is 8 days. The platform’s activities are regulated by the Decree of the Government of Moscow No. 234-PP dated April 15, 2013 “On the Interactive Interaction of Executive Authorities of the City of Moscow with the Population of the City of Moscow”, as well as by specialized regulations. According to the results of the consideration of citizens' appeals, about 71% of complaints were resolved, which proves the high efficiency of such projects [13].

The development of the above digital platforms is one of the important factors in the fight against corruption. Their functioning is based on the principles of transparency, simplicity, wide participation of citizens in the affairs of the region / territory / country. When using such resources, there is an understanding of what this or that state body is responsible

for, how it carries out its activities. Simplification is associated with minimizing the role of intermediaries, that is, a citizen must file a complaint directly with a government agency using a portal (platform).

It should be noted the significant functional impact of social Internet networks on the organization of public law and order and socio-political development. At present, it can be argued that social networks are important both for the development of democratic civil society institutions and for improving the efficiency of public administration[14].

Increasing transparency at any time and anywhere access to transactions, services, documents and online databases makes it difficult for government officials to participate in corrupt practices.

V. CONCLUSION

Recently, we have seen a decline in citizens' trust in government bodies in developed countries. One possible reason for this is that the traditional mechanisms of democracy have become ineffective. E-democracy tools must become medicine. Publishing the results of government on websites allows tracking news from government agencies and at the same time creates space for the development of active citizen participation in the management of government affairs. The use of resources with feedback significantly increases the positive effect of e-democracy, including anti-corruption.

Modernization and acceleration of information and communication channels between citizens and public administration, as well as between authorities, is in the interests of society.

Axiom is the postulate that e-government is an effective tool in the fight against corruption. Services provided by the government, mainly in electronic form, are interlinked with anti-corruption indicators and have a positive impact on the transparency of government and the credibility of government. Accordingly, e-government can play an important role in the fight against corruption by increasing public access to information, empowering civil society to control, and empowering citizens to control government decisions and public officials. [15]

The development and implementation of the idea of e-government (maturity) presupposes the complication of transactions between citizens and the state administration and more complex and active interaction with citizens, the involvement of citizens in governance processes.

The use of information technology increases the percentage of citizens' involvement in public administration at all levels, providing an opportunity to discuss issues of interest in various online communities, and increasing the influence of individual groups on political decision-making. The state can provide better services by increasing the efficiency and transparency of the management process.

Current global trends in government change (Smart City initiatives, the provision of public services in electronic form, data disclosure, mobile applications for interconnection with government agencies, special platforms, crowds, etc.) cannot be the same patterns for all countries in relations with various economic, demographic, geographical, and other variables. Thus, it is obvious that the concept of Smart City as a means of

improving the quality of life of citizens is becoming increasingly important, but it is still difficult to determine the general global trends [16]. They depend on the local context.

Social Internet networks, mobile applications, specially created platforms become an effective mechanism for civil examination [17]. Despite the digital divide in the population, the majority still have access to public discussions on topics, the formation and sending to organizations (public authorities and local governments) of open public collective appeals and the public assessment by citizens of the responses received from organizations [18].

The role of e-participation in providing feedback on services and problem solving is also an important part of building an anti-corruption society. It's important to understand that feedback and criticism take place in real time.

We show that the spread of technologies and the possible electronic participation of citizens in state affairs through them clearly acts as a mechanism for controlling corruption. It seems necessary to develop and adopt a federal law "On the participation of citizens in public administration". It consolidate the basic definitions, such as: electronic democracy, electronic participation, a single portal of citizens' appeals, a regional city portal, a regional municipal portal, digital circulation, etc. It is worth taking into account the experience of Moscow and provide for a 7-day period for the consideration of citizens' complaints. The main technical characteristics of the portals should be fixed in the appendix to the normative act or issued as a separate by-law. This federal law should oblige all regional and local authorities to create their own city and municipal portal; keep track of complaints received from residents and transmit information about the number of appeals to a single portal, which will collect statistics on the number of successfully resolved complaints. Ideally, each city (and in the future, each municipality) should turn from a traditional metropolitan area into a metropolis of the twenty-first century. This will create additional control over the activities of executive bodies. Also, the portal will need to regularly publish data on the activities of executive authorities. The purpose of the adoption of the federal law will be to increase the transparency of the work of state bodies, increase the efficiency of their activities, tighten control by citizens, as well as reduce corruption. Information technology is changing the way politics is organized in modern states. Smart Cities base their strategy on the use of information and communication technologies [19]. The focus usually focuses on several areas: economics, the environment, urban infrastructure and public services.

Modern digital technologies can significantly increase the level of citizen involvement in public administration. The consequence of this will be strengthening control over the activities of executive bodies, reducing the influence of individual officials on the consideration of citizens' appeals, since the interaction will be carried out remotely and impersonally.

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