EQGP concept: principles and models of expert quality control of the government policy

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Abstract. The article studies the problems of quality and efficiency of public administration. The article describes foundations of a new concept of public administration – the concept of expert quality control of the government policy (EQGP), which is an effective way to improve the quality and efficiency of government in post-industrial (information) society. In order to improve the efficiency of government administration, it is necessary to improve the mechanisms for forming public bodies and to implement monitoring mechanisms into the system of public bodies formation. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to activate expert communities (“expert factories”), to enhance expert and analytical activities both at the stage of formation of public bodies (examination of election programs) and monitoring of their activities (examination of reports). Depending on the positions occupied by experts in the decision-making system, four models of expert control have been identified. The features of each model are presented. The article also describes the basic principles of EQGP.

Keywords: public administration, quality of public administration, efficiency of public administration, expert quality control

1 Introduction

The issue of an ideal state formulated by Socrates and Plato more than two thousand years ago still excites the minds of thinkers in the 21st century.

Scientists have developed a variety of theoretical concepts and models of government.

A. Leiphart proceeded from the fact that modern society is a multi-component formation, consisting of certain segments distinguished by linguistic, ethnic, racial, religious, and other parameters (“segmental differences”).

Leiphart identified four basic parameters of consocial democracy:

• the exercise of power by a large coalition of political leaders of all significant segments of a multi-component society, which implies, first of all, the creation of a coalition government with the participation of all parties representing the main sections of society;

• proportionality as the main principle of political representation, distribution of posts in the state apparatus and state budget funds;

• mutual veto or "coinciding majority" rule, acting as an additional guarantee of the vital interests of the minority, which implies, when making a final decision, not an ordinary, but a qualified majority (two-thirds or three-quarters of the votes), which would give representatives of minorities additional chances to protect their interests;

• a high degree of autonomy for each segment in managing its internal affairs [1].

In the concept of pluralistic democracy [2], the emphasis is on the process of interaction and competition of many political forces in the power struggle, none of which can dominate (because each reflects only part of the interests).

A state can be considered democratic if many associations (parties, interest groups) actively participate in the political process and reach a consensus during the competition.

Due to the diversity of positions, it is impossible to reach an agreement that satisfies all parties. Therefore, the basis of compromise is the principle of the majority, while also protecting the claims and rights of minorities.

Robert Dahl introduces the concept of polyarchy as a political order that has two fundamental properties: the granting of broad civil rights and the possibility of removing officials by voting.

Polyarchy, as a system, can function based on seven main mechanisms:

1. Sufficiently regular free and fair elections.
2. The presence of the adult population of the right to participate in these elections.
3. Election at such elections of officials; the possibility of removing officials during elections.
4. The right of broad sections of the adult population to participate in elections as candidates for elective office.
5. The right of citizens to freedom of expression (criticism of the activities of officials, the political course of the government, etc.).
6. Free access to alternative media not controlled by the government.
7. The right of citizens to create independent associations (interest groups, parties) to influence the political course of the government, and to participate in the power struggle.

The pluralistic concept gives rise to several problems: many citizens are not members of certain associations, which means that the problem of not representing the interests of wide sections of society will arise; in addition, as a result of a sharp struggle between powerful interest groups, paralysis of the political system of society can also occur.

In the elitist concept of democracy, society consists of the elite (the ruling minority) and the masses (the non-ruling majority). Since the masses do not have the necessary competencies and knowledge to make the right decisions, they voluntarily transfer this right to a more experienced and competent elite through electoral procedures.

“Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity to accept or not accept those people who should govern them” [3].

Several provisions of the elite theory of democracy are outlined in the work of T. Dai and L. Ziegler “Democracy for the Elite. Introduction to American Politics” [4].

- a minority with power distributes material values, and a majority that does not determine state policy;
- elites are formed mainly from representatives of the highest socio-economic stratum of society;
- the transition to the elite should be slow and long to maintain stability and avoid radicalism;
- the elites are united in their approach to the basic values of the social system and the preservation of the system itself;
- public policy reflects not the demands of the masses, but the dominant interests of the elite;
- the ruling elites are subject to relatively weak direct influence from the indifferent part of the citizens [5].

The emergence of the concept of deliberative democracy was associated, as noted by some political scientists, with an attempt to overcome the crisis of the representative system [6].

In the concept of deliberative democracy, the procedure for making political decisions is based on the active participation of citizens (deliberation) in a rational public dialogue (discourse), during which a rational public position is developed that allows reaching a consensus. As Habermas noted, “In the association of free and equal, everyone should be able to understand themselves as the authors of those laws that each individual feels connected to as their addressee” [7].

The difference between deliberation and debate is that in debates, opponents defend their positions no matter what, and deliberation involves enriching a person’s position, and readiness to correct a point of view after getting acquainted with alternative views. The goal is not to win one individual over another, but to develop a true position.

In addition to the concepts of democracy briefly described above, there are others in modern political science: the concepts of legal democracy, technodemocracy, informational democracy, delegative democracy, the systemic theory of democracy, the theory of agonistic democracy, etc. A detailed analysis of the concepts of democracy is presented in the works of D. Held (Held, 2014), Gracheva M.N., and Madatova A.S. (Grachev, Madatov, 2004).

Reflections on the ideal state are hardly possible without taking into account new factors in the transition of society to the post-industrial phase of development. The fragmentation of political, social and economic systems has increased; pluralism of values guaranteed by the law and equal activity of political subjects caused the diversification of political participants; an increase in the number of structures expressing interests of numerous subjects determined the complex nature of administration systems at the present stage of development of the state and society.

Russia is “dealing with problems that are common to the entire civilization”; one of which is “the need to create a social management system capable of responding to the challenges of the new century: economic globalization, financial and information systems on a global scale, etc.” [8].

We have developed a new concept of public administration – the concept of expert quality control of the Government Policy (EQGP), – aimed at improving the efficiency of government and the quality of decisions taking into account the trends of the 21st century.

The EQGP is the result of interdisciplinary social research (economics, political philosophy, theory of state and municipal government, political science, system analysis, etc.).

The article will describe the basic concepts and theoretical principles of the EQGP concept and the main models of expert quality control of government policy.

2 Methods
In the development of the EQGP concept, modeling methods and the comparative historical method were used.

3 Results and Discussion
Define the three basic concepts of EQGP: government, government actors and non-state government actors.

There are a large number of definitions of the concept of public administration [9–11].
Quite productive and close to our concept is the definition of public administration provided by Kaufman and Cray in their work "Governance Indicators: Where Are We, Where Should We Be Going?". Public administration is traditions and institutions by which power is exercised, including a) how governments are formed, controlled and succeeded; b) the ability of governments to formulate and implement sound policies; c) respect for citizens and civil servants for institutions that regulate socio-economic relations between them" [12].

Using this interpretation, we developed the following working definition: public administration is the systematic interaction between government and non-government actors in the development and high-quality implementation of government policy within the legislation, including: a) effective mechanisms for the formation of public authorities; b) effective mechanisms of control over the public authorities.

The concepts of "government" and "non-government actors" are borrowed from the World Development Report which claims that to solve the problems of developing countries (corruption, "resource curse", economic slowdown, etc.), "it is necessary to rethink how government and non-government actors interact in the development and implementation of policy measures..." [11]

Government actors are a set of bodies endowed with power and managing social processes and relations. Non-government actors are citizens, bearers of sovereignty and the highest source of power in republics, including representatives of civil society united in associations.

In accordance with the principle of democracy, the dominant role in this interaction belongs to non-government actors. Their power is exercised directly or through public and municipal bodies.

The highest expression of direct power of non-government actors is referendums and elections, as the only legitimate ways of delegating power to government actors and officials. It should be emphasized that non-government actors delegate powers (to "operational management") to the government actors, while retaining their constituent power (the right to re-elect and replace officials).

In the struggle for obtaining powers candidates use a wide range of tools: rallies, advertising campaigns, meetings with voters, black PR, etc.

Elections are usually won by candidates or parties that have been able to attract funding and conduct an effective advertising campaign. In this case, a "competence problem" arises: whether a voter being a non-specialist in politics and public administration can make the right choice?

The victory in elections depends on the voter's faith in election programs and promises which are virtual.

In addition, "this character does not change even after the end of the election campaign, which affects the level of trust of the electorate and can contribute to the indifference to the political life, which is observed in modern Russia" [13].

Another question arises: whether a voter can analyze the pre-election programs lacking enough free time?

We believe that the crisis of democracy is largely due to the paralysis of the rational choice of voters and disorientation within the unpredictable flows of the information field.

The development of information technologies and the unprecedented virtualization of government policy (political cyber reality) have transformed political communications. The Internet has provided an opportunity to retransmit images and meanings through numerous formats, to construct a more efficient political reality, including on the basis of 3D and XR technologies for generating virtual worlds in the interests of certain political forces.

Thus, it is currently impossible to answer the question "how to build an ideal state" without taking into account the above trends.

Therefore, the ideal state is a state in which the key positions are occupied by intellectual structures ("thought factories") professionally engaged in processing information flows and creating expert content in the interests of citizens participating in the formation of public authorities (voters).

The existing mechanisms for the formation of public authorities should be transformed. They reduce the electoral political culture to a culture of consumption ("political consumption"), and the voter's behavior – to the behavior of the mass consumer, which reduces the significance of traditional democratic mechanisms for transferring power to government actors.

It is no coincidence that areas such as political advertising, political marketing, and political branding are actively developing in modern democracies. The current electoral system eliminates the difference between the choice of drinks (Coca-Cola, Sprite, Mirinda), chocolate bars (Snickers, Mars) and officials: in all cases, the key role belongs to successful advertising slogans ("Don't slow down – Snickersney", "LDPR or endure further").

The quality and efficiency of public administration depends on civil servants ("staff decides everything"), who were elected through the general democratic elections.

Within the EQGP, we have developed new mechanisms for the formation of public authorities and control over their activities presented in four models.

The three basic theoretical principles of EQGP are: meritocracy, new justice and regular examination.

1. The principle of meritocracy. Government administration is the prerogative of highly qualified specialists. This principle applies to both non-government and government actors.

The Minister of Agriculture should be an expert in agriculture, the chairman of parliamentary science and education committees should be experts in science and education, and all voters must be specialists in various fields.

2. The principle of new justice. Plato believed that the best is the public system based on the idea of justice. In a just state, everyone does his own thing, that is, what he is
well versed in, which corresponds to his spiritual qualities (he is a professional).

In accordance with the principle of new justice, all government actors should deal only with their own issues and do not interfere with others.

For example, a non-specialist in science and education cannot be engaged in the development and implementation of government science and education policy and hold positions in these areas both at the executive (minister, deputy minister) and legislative (chairman of the parliamentary committee, deputy chairman of the parliamentary committee) levels.

This principle also applies to non-government actors: citizens who are not specialists in the field of science and education cannot evaluate the scientific and educational part of election programs.

3. The principle of regular examination.

The principle of regular examination implies the existence of a systematic (expert-analytical) activity of experts united in “expert factories”.

Non-government actors should examine election programs of political forces (within the electoral process), assess their personnel potential, etc.

“Expert factories” should conduct regular (e.g., annual) examinations (monitoring) of the government activities through the development and improvement of criteria and evaluation methods (expert assessment, expert analysis, brainstorming, expert review, etc.).

Using these principles, a new scheme of relations between the non-government and government actors has been built. It is the relation of expert control.

The functions of expert control are assigned to a special group – experts united in “expert factories” on a thematic basis.

There can be four models of expert control relations, depending on the position occupied by expert factories in the decision-making system.

1) model “A”: factories occupy a key position in the decision-making system (decisive position). The expert opinion becomes the final basis for the victory in elections and the removal from the position in case of a negative examination.

2) model “B”: the decision-making center is non-government actors (“mass voter”), the victory in elections is traditionally achieved if they gain the largest number of votes. This model embodies the classical scheme of democracy supplemented by the work of factories.

Expert opinions give voters some guidance on the election programs (how achievable the given indicators are, what is the personnel potential, etc.) and reports of elected persons (extent to what the program has been implemented).

Since the decisive position belongs to the “mass voter”, model “B” is “weak.” Accordingly, model “A” is “strong.”

There are also two mixed models: “C” model and “D” model.

3) “C” model: the public bodies are formed traditionally, through the general democratic elections. The functions of control over the elected officials are assigned to experts. Results of the examination determine whether the officials elected through the general democratic elections will retain their mandates.

4) “D” model: at the stage of formation of public bodies, experts dominate, and the decision to retain mandates for officials depends on the “mass voter” (vote of no confidence, referendum, etc.).

Relations between factories and non-government actors are contractual.

There is an agreement on the implementation of mechanisms for expert quality control of government policy concluded between civil society (customer) and experts (performers).

The agreement can be titled in different ways: the agreement for provision of expert services, the agreement for examination, the agreement for provision of expert services, etc.

The conclusion of the agreement according to model “A” means that experts have power to form government bodies and control their activities.

The “B” model agreement involves the examination of the election programs and reports on the activities of officials, while the power to form government bodies remains with the voters.

Within the “C” and “D” models, both contracts are in force.

Expert councils should be independent structures within their competence. They should be accountable to society and fulfill their main task: organizing and conducting an examination of government policy, both at the design and implementation levels.

The role of these councils in the system of government bodies is similar to that of the Central Electoral Commissions. Both expert councils and electoral commissions can become federal bodies independent of other bodies in accordance with the law on the examination of government policy and electoral legislation.

The expert council can consist of a center (e.g., a Presidium) with several branches. The Presidium consists of the chairman, deputies, a secretary and members. The Chairman is elected at the general meeting.

A candidate for the position of Chairman submits a program (strategy) for the development of the expert council and presents candidacies of deputies to the apparatus (a secretary and other employees).

The primary task of the Presidium is to coordinate the work of the departments through regular interactions.

The departments enjoy a high degree of creative freedom: the presidium does not have the right to restrict or influence the expert-analytical activities of the departments.

The Presidium monitors compliance with the technical and organizational requirements for the production of expert opinions (e.g., compliance with the rules on issuing expert opinions, the production timing, etc.).

In addition, the distribution function of the Presidium is also important: it distributes all applications from candidates for members of the expert council, candidates for government positions, parties, as well as reports on...
the work done by departments in accordance with their thematic areas.

The Presidium checks all applications and reports for their compliance with the technical requirements. In case of errors, these materials are revised. In other cases, the relevant departments conduct an expert-analytical study (examination) and issue an expert opinion (examination result).

The Presidium consists of all department coordinators elected by the meetings of the respective departments.

Coordinators of the related departments (e.g., the “finance” department and the “industry” department) can meet regularly at meetings of the board of coordinators to discuss general issues of expert and analytical activities.

Thus, the expert council is an independent and permanent body dealing coordinating expert and analytical activities (expertise) and producing expert opinions on the development and implementation of government policy.

4 Conclusion

The present study developed a new definition of the concept of public administration and described the main principles and models of expert quality control of government policy (EQGP).

References

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