

# Formation of Anti-Corruption Consciousness of Citizens as a Direction of Interaction of Public Authorities and Institutions of Civil Society

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## Abstract

This article defines the process of formation of anti-corruption consciousness as one of the areas of interaction between public authorities and civil society institutions. It is concluded that the implementation of the state anti-corruption policy in Ukraine may be more promising if the institutions of civil society are actively involved. The degree of citizen engagement can be increased by increasing social trust, as well as by increasing the level of political and legal education and culture. Particular attention should be paid to the organization of public control and monitoring of the activities of public authorities, impartial coverage of information on the fight against corruption in the media, as well as the joint conduct of an information and educational campaign and the promotion of the formation of anti-corruption consciousness among a large number of citizens.

## Key words:

*public authorities, civil society institutions, mass media, public associations, anti-corruption policy.*

## 1. Introduction

According to a large number of sociological surveys, the problem of corruption has been identified as one of the most significant obstacles in the development of the state. This is also confirmed by a number of scientific studies pointing to the importance of minimizing the level of corruption in Ukraine. It is generally recognized that the state of the spread of corruption in the state is largely influenced by socio-psychological factors. One of such factors of accepting or not accepting this negative phenomenon is public consciousness, awareness by citizens of the importance of overcoming it. The more developed anti-corruption consciousness, the more active the public in the fight against corruption. At present, the question has arisen of considering the potential of power-public interaction in conducting information and educational

activities among the population, organizing control and monitoring of the activities of the authorities and the formation of anti-corruption consciousness.

The purpose of the article is to determine the process of formation of anti-corruption consciousness as one of the areas of interaction between public authorities and civil society institutions.

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## 2. Methodology

The research methodology includes a number of methods of a theoretical and analytical nature, involving the analysis and synthesis of information in order to systematize it and form one's own vision on this issue. Thanks to the abstract-logical method, appropriate conclusions were drawn from the results of the study.

## 3. Research Results

One of the guarantees of the effectiveness of the implementation of the state anti-corruption policy is the provision of systematic bilateral control, which involves both public authorities and civil society institutions. Such an organization of control allows us to talk about creating conditions for greater objectivity and overcoming the biased attitude of the public towards the authorities. The organization of control, its information support and the formation of the information field of anti-corruption activities largely depend on the media, because they have a

significant impact on the formation of public consciousness, including anti-corruption [1-4].

It is obvious that a significant number of citizens support the opinion that it is corruption that is a threat to the development of the state, however, at the same time, the problem is a contradictory attitude towards this phenomenon, when some corruption violations can be condemned, and some are perceived as commonplace. That is why it is necessary to form in the minds of citizens a negative attitude towards any manifestations of corruption.

Along with the media, an equally important role in overcoming corruption threats and shaping anti-corruption consciousness in the public belongs to diverse public associations. Regardless of the direction of their activity, they can also act as a relay of information on the implementation of anti-corruption policies, take part in exposing the facts of corruption, be involved in measures to combat corruption, as well as organize and conduct educational activities. At the same time, both the activities of the media and the activities of various kinds of public associations cannot be fully successful without interaction with public authorities, their support and regulatory consolidation [5-7].

In terms of interaction in the implementation of anti-corruption policy, the decentralization reform can be called a positive factor. Due to the shift of power to a lower level, civil society institutions have more opportunities for direct contact with public authorities, establishing interaction, and implementing joint projects.

In general, it can be stated that now there is a situation where the degree of distrust of society in the leadership of the state has reached such a limit that the anti-corruption policy and all measures taken to prevent and combat corruption are perceived as a farce or a tribute to the IMF and the EU to bring Ukrainian legislation on formal grounds to generally recognized standards of foreign countries.

In recent years, volunteer organizations have shown themselves to a large extent both in social issues and in solving a number of problems generated by military operations in Ukraine. Unlike other institutions of civil society, volunteering has a pronounced social movement and in most cases is positively perceived by citizens. This means that the information they disseminate can be perceived

positively. Thanks to this, it can be confidently stated that volunteer organizations can act as one of the most successful leaders in the implementation of anti-corruption policies and instilling in citizens a stable negative attitude towards manifestations of corruption.

Therefore, it can be stated that in the implementation of the anti-corruption policy of the state, one of the biggest problems is the total distrust of the authorities, which is to some extent connected with the second problem - the interaction of the authorities with society and civil society institutions is unsystematic, has a spontaneous character, and therefore the information field is formed unilaterally. To overcome these problems, public authorities need to establish systematic and constructive interaction with civil society institutions, which, through a greater level of trust, can become an intermediary between the authorities and the public in the implementation of anti-corruption policy, a significant element of which is the formation of anti-corruption consciousness.

An active public position, participation in the activities of civil society institutions and an active life position allow us to talk about increasing the effectiveness of these institutions. It should be noted that this creates conditions for the formation of mechanisms for the interaction of public authorities with civil society institutions, which in turn will contribute to the rise to a higher quality level of activity in general. Also, researchers determine that public monitoring allows you to establish the results of the activities of the government body and achieve certain program results (Fig. 1).

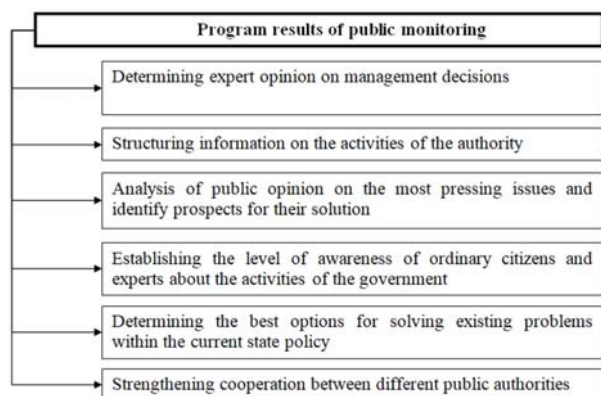


Figure 1: Program results of monitoring the activities of public authorities

One of the options for solving the problem of the formation of anti-corruption consciousness can be power-public interaction in the form of the activities of advisory and advisory bodies, such as public councils. They may include representatives of various institutions of civil society, including those representing the private sector. Unfortunately, practice shows that the activities of advisory bodies can only be declarative, or different public councils are created. Some of them deal with social and humanitarian issues and include the general public, while others deal with financial and economic issues and housing. As a result, there is a gap in the interaction between different institutions of civil society. In addition, a number of decisions can generally be made outside the consideration of advisory bodies, since members of the executive committees and local deputies represent the interests of certain business structures.

At the same time, business problems are fixed, among which are the following:

- expenses for official registration of entrepreneurial activity, financial reporting;
- high level of corruption among representatives of public authorities of different levels;
- low level of legal education among entrepreneurs, especially among small businesses;
- insufficient consolidation of business representatives to protect their rights.

It is obvious that a significant layer of Ukrainian business problems can be solved only by joint efforts and a set of measures throughout the country. However, some of them could be resolved through the participation of civil society institutions. The same unions of entrepreneurs, human rights

organizations and anti-corruption public organizations could, in cooperation with public authorities, contribute to overcoming the problems of corruption, low level of legal literacy and consolidation of the private sector. At the very least, this can happen at the local level, provided that citizens are activated and public servants acquire competencies.

The directions of socio-political transformation are shown in Figure 2.

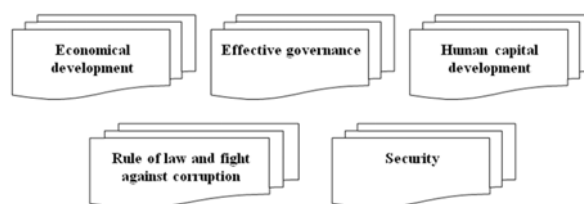


Figure 2: Directions of socio-political transformation

In general, this division can be considered conditional, since the transformations are complex and are somehow interconnected and have mutual influence. The process of forming an effective public administration system is associated with decentralization and digitalization. Together they have an impact on everything that falls under the sphere of influence of public authorities, including reforms in other areas: protecting the rights of citizens, preventing corruption, infrastructure, land issues, business climate, healthcare, education, etc. Based on the thesis that everyone is responsible for what is happening in the state, it should be noted that the effectiveness of the transformations depends on the authorities and representatives of civil society in the form of its individual institutions. It is their fruitful interaction and combination of efforts that should contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals of the state. The authorities were faced with the task of organizing the process of implementing state policy in such a way that civil society institutions acted as a permanent assistant and partner in it.

It is equally important to take into account the fact that society is not permanent, it changes over time under the influence of a wide range of factors. Accordingly, public authorities should be constantly in contact with civil society institutions, which are bright representatives of public sentiments,

expectations, preferences, etc. In this direction, one of the main goals of the authorities may be the establishment of effective mechanisms for interaction with the above-mentioned institutions. In such a process, one cannot expect a spontaneous rise in the level of activity on the part of citizens and an increase in the number of civil society institutions. One of the tasks facing public authorities is precisely the development of a set of measures that will bring civil society in Ukraine to a level where the people, without prompting, will independently show interest in participating in management activities.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to develop and implement a set of measures of a normative, organizational and educational nature. Given the controversial situation with the state of public consciousness of Ukrainians, one of the risks on a certain path is the need to maintain a balance between the management of society and a completely liberal attitude to how it develops. In other words, the authorities must create appropriate conditions for development, push and encourage action, but at the same time, it is impossible to strictly regulate the activities of the same institutions of civil society, since this will exclude the possibility of building partnerships.

#### 4. Discussions

Today, in the context of the continuous informatization of society and the state's course towards digitalization, there are virtually no insurmountable obstacles to attract citizens to participate in management activities, make management decisions and public cooperation. Anyone can become a participant in the process, and only the degree of interest in this and, in part, the inability to use modern information and communication technologies can become a problem [8-11].

The degree of citizen engagement can be increased by increasing social trust, as well as by increasing the level of political and legal education and culture. The latter is more effective in the development of civil society, since it gives a general direction for its development and allows increasing public self-awareness [12-15]. At the same time, this process is quite long and complicated, since it requires a lot of efforts on the part of public authorities and, over time, the efforts of civil society

institutions. Having formed themselves, their activities will encourage others to a more conscious attitude towards the state as a whole, towards state power, local self-government and determining their place in power-social interaction. In other words, the emphasis should be placed on educational activities, raising the level of literacy of people, educating critically thinking and effective individuals.

#### 5. Conclusions

Today, it is possible to record a crisis of trust in most social institutions, among which public authorities and representatives in general have the lowest level of trust. One of the options for resolving such a situation may be the mediation of civil society institutions, the level of trust in which is much higher, and there are numerous opportunities to influence the consciousness of citizens.

Thus, the formation of anti-corruption consciousness can occur both directly through the direct actions of public authorities, and indirectly through the institutions of civil society. A striking example is the conduct of public control and monitoring, which already influences the formation of anti-corruption consciousness. If there is a real benefit to society from such monitoring and control, then in the worldview of citizens an opinion will be formed that it is necessary to fight corruption and that this fight can lead to real consequences.

Along with the above, no less important is the constant interaction between the authorities and the institutions of civil society, for example, through the activities of public councils. Interaction with the media is coming to the fore, both as a relay of information about the actions of the authorities, and as an independent party and a powerful tool for shaping public consciousness.

Throughout the world, corruption is recognized as a big problem for the state and its development, although it has always been inherent in almost all societies. Regardless of the status and level of development of the country, the presence of corruption in the public service undermines the legitimacy of power, threatens the fundamental values of society and its sovereignty, causes distrust on the part of other states and makes their cooperation impossible. In almost every country, the civil service is an indicator of its development and specifically the "face" of the country. The ability of

the civil service to effectively counteract corruption encourages it to improve its institutions, which becomes an example of the permanence of changes in society and an adequate response to social challenges is an important basis for a realistic perspective of Ukraine's membership in the EU. Effective prevention and counteraction to corruption, development and implementation of anti-corruption measures is one of the priorities of the state power in Ukraine, which requires the formation and implementation of an effective anti-corruption policy in the civil service. Since the first years of independence, it has been constantly noted in the reports of the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service, materials of scientific and practical conferences, congresses of various international organizations that Ukraine is experiencing a significant negative impact of corruption. At the same time, there are always manifestations of corruption in medicine, educational activities, in the sphere of licensing and control activities of state authorities in relation to entrepreneurs, during state administration and control over the payment of taxes and customs clearance of goods, in the field of public procurement, the energy sector, the distribution of land and other natural resources. Manifestations of corruption in the activities of judicial and law enforcement agencies are especially dangerous.

The fundamental principle of interaction between civil servants and the population should be the openness of the activities of public authorities. The active position and interest of the public in relation to control over the exercise of power should be formed at the level of civic duty and the consciousness of the citizens themselves, and wide awareness of cases of corruption, reporting by officials on the results of the investigation of cases and the measures taken to prevent corruption should be not only before the body state power, but before the population itself. It is advisable to develop mechanisms for targeted study and implementation of international best practices in the formation and implementation of anti-corruption policy in the public service system, to improve and increase the effectiveness of the institutional framework for preventing and combating corruption by optimizing the system and functions of central and local public authorities, the processes of further reforming and modernizing the public service.

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