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NEW MEDIA AND

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THE STRATEGIC

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# NEW MEDIA AND NEW PUBLIC GOVERNANCE: THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION APPROACH

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# Introduction

Modern network society impacts the forms in which the interactions between various participants in various levels of public administration take place: requirements for flexibility and interaction between the different participants in public governance are created by the access of online communication and information facilities that create possibilities to obtain information, consultations and services in a timely, appropriate and convenient way.

The concept of public administration is traditionally defined through the analysis of public administration participants (individuals, groups, and organizations), their activities and interactions. The book presents a different approach to the topic with a presentation of development, planning and the implementation of adequate actions for better performance through the application of communication strategies, or in other words, through the strategic implementation of communication activities.

Different aspects in the field of communication studies are exposed in this book. Communication is studied as a process, as a model and an instrument for overcoming barriers, building satisfaction, mutual understanding, consensus and trust. The tradition of analysis of communication activities in the public sector is related with the linear understanding of communication (mainly, with information) processes. A modern approach to communication includes a dialogical approach and comfort for both online and face-to-face communication. The application of this approach implies a search for changes in the understanding and interpretation of public governance, its processes, and interactions in the context of communicative activities. Or to be more precise, communication processes (mostly because of the application of information technologies) are impacting changes in public management processes: one-way (linear) processes of interaction between public authorities and other participants of public government are changing into two-way (interaction) processes where

not only feedback, but the real engagement of participants in interaction is the basis for effective public governance.

Strategic communication includes all communication activities such as public relations, marketing communication, business communication, organisational communication, and a focus on results. It is focused on the achievement of target activities.

The analysis of the public sector must also call attention to the shift from new public management to public governance, which focuses on the involvement of all stakeholders in the public management processes. For successful interaction, cooperation and effective communication is necessary.

*Scientific problem:*

Public administration mostly focuses on administrative issues, processes, public administration representatives, and processes between different participants in the public sector. However, there is almost no scholarly and applied analysis of communication presented in the public sector, although lately it has become an essential tool for ensuring the implementation of public governance.

*The aim of the book:*

This book aims to highlight the relevant participants of management and administration in the public sector by emphasizing the communicative aspect.

*Methods that were used in the analyses presented in the book:*

The book is constructed on the meta-theoretical approach that communication is the basis for every activity and interaction on various levels: between individuals, groups, organizations and states. The communicative activities are understood as the key components of processes that occur in public governance and create the system of interactions among those participants. For the analysis of communication and its application by specific participants of public governance (governmental institutions, NGOs, citizens, businesses, media) a set of qualitative methods was used: content analysis, surveys, discourse analysis, expert interviews, etc.



*Content of the book.*

The composition of the book is related with the concept of new public governance in its search to present basic aspects, such as new public administration and the engagement of citizens, NGOs, business and media in governance processes. It also addresses and discusses the changing role of governmental institutions, especially in relation to the expanding role of new media.

The first article presented in the book “**Trust in governmental institutions is the main requirement for effective new public management**” is based on a discussion of the changing communicative activities of governmental institutions caused by the application of new public administration perspectives. As stated in the chapter, the essential requirement for democracy is the efficiency of the interactions of governmental institutions and other stakeholders, such as citizens and NGOs that depend on trust. The efficiency of communication activities depends on the information that is available for the participants in the new public management processes. One of the main information sources for stakeholders that encourages participation in discussions and debates is the media, but based on the implementation of modern IT, more active involvement of the stakeholders in public management processes is feasible. Of course, the use of information technologies promotes interactions that are based on confidence in public sector institutions, in the mutual understanding of shared interests between individuals and those institutions, and on understanding the importance of the possibility to participate in decision-making processes. In the chapter, the confidence in governmental institutions is discussed as the main factor that determines the efficiency of the application of a new public governance idea. In democratic societies, greater attention is paid to citizens’ trust in the governmental institutions, mostly in public authorities, and the main factors that affect that trust are issues such as openness, transparency, honesty, good intentions and professionalism. The issue of trust is discussed in the section: why trust is important in the new public management and what determines the decline of trust, and

what are the factors and communicative actions that ensure the establishment and strengthening of trust between the different representatives and participants of public management. The set of factors that could be used for the analysis of trust in governmental institutions are introduced in the section. The theoretical discussion presented in the chapter is supplemented by the data from surveys conducted in 2016. The communication of governmental institutions in their webpages were analysed, taking into account the factors that influence trust and those that are based on the communicative activities of governmental institutions. As the author of the chapter claims, information technologies shape the communication processes in several possible ways, and mainly, to some extent, they create possibilities to engage citizens and other stakeholders in public discussions and decision-making processes. These processes change the communication actions of the participants of new public management (in these specific cases, governmental institutions and their stakeholders) from one-way communication to “two-way”.

In the second article of the book “**Public Governance: Policy and Communication**”, the concept of public governance and cooperation between public administration institutions and NGOs is discussed. Along with the decrease of administrative influences, the effective function of contemporary public administration needs the support and partnership of society. The necessity to consider the reaction of society and the mass media requires the dissemination of information to create public understanding on decisions made by the public administration, especially unpopular ones, as well as to ensure an opportunity for individuals to become involved in the decision-making process. As discussed in the chapter, changes impacted by the transformation of public administration to public governance have increased the need to develop cooperation between non-governmental organizations and public administration. This requires both public policy to encourage and promote the participation of NGOs in public administration as well as communication activities from the public

administration to provide information about opportunities for NGOs to participate in public administration decision-making processes. In order to understand the role of NGOs in public administration processes, the author has studied trends present in the relational transformation between the public administration and NGOs during several state reform development stages in the restored Republic of Latvia. Using qualitative research methods – content analysis, discourse analysis and expert interviews, the object of this research is to define two main vectors of NGO activities: NGOs as an equivalent public administration partner and NGOs as a promulgator of public protest.

Analysis of the place of NGOs in current social and political processes in Latvia was made by tracing it back to the main vectors: the vector of activity and the vector of protest. The vector of activity represents the involvement of NGOs in decision-making processes in accordance with the interests of some public group. The vector of protest as an NGO activity becomes apparent in the context of the NGO's role as a public activator and how it influences public opinion mostly by protests against political or administrative decisions. During various historical, social and political conditions, the importance and proportion of every NGO's activities vector establishes a particular relations pattern between the public administration and NGOs.

The article **“E-participation in New Public Governance: NGO activities for civil participation”** outlines the relationship between New Public Governance (NPG) and e-participation, emphasizing civil engagement and participation in particular multi-sector initiatives and projects. In this case, the concept of New Public Governance assures that civil engagement and participation is important and meaningful in the expression of practical participatory democracy. E-participation refers to the information and communication technology based point of access that is used by NGOs to carry out civil engagement related activities. Therefore, this article also presents the connection between New Public Governance and e-participation that highlights civil participation

by presenting the mediatory, representative and public affairs decision-making processes that are carried out by NGOs.

The article **“Citizens as customers: the role of communication in increasing their satisfaction in public services”** analyses the change of relations among participants in the public sector. The debate about the public sector’s problems increasingly emphasises the need to understand citizens, to be able to meet their expectations and to manage them, and on the basis of effective communication, to develop cooperation with the citizens. This chapter aims to look at the productivity problems of the public sector from the viewpoint of citizens as customers, and to analyse the role of communication, in order to increase the satisfaction of the consumers of public services. The new situation of the public sphere requires new methods and new patterns of interaction and communication among the participators. Emerging debates among the scholars, politics and members of society show how many questions should be answered. The debate about the quality of public services involves a number of interest groups, because this area is closely linked to developments in all areas of human activities, and the quality of life of all citizens of the state in general. The question is how to provide value and satisfaction with the services received by citizens as consumers. A variety of consumer satisfaction measurement methodologies are being developed and improved. However, satisfaction with these processes is apparent as a result if the services meet the needs of citizens, are in line with their expectations, and are provided in a qualified and timely manner. The approach to the citizen as a consumer encourages the application of marketing tools and techniques in the field of public administration. The author considers aspects of communication development, which would tackle the contemporary problems of the public sector and reduce the dissatisfaction of the service consumers in the sector concerning the current situation. Under the conditions of participatory democracy, communication among the government and public administration institutions is an essential part of every activity in this sphere.

The article **“A dialogue in communication between entrepreneurs and representatives of the public administration in Latvia”** explores the communication between such important stakeholders of the Latvian public administration as entrepreneurs and public administrators (politicians, state officials and leaders of trade unions). There are problems in finding a common language and consensus despite the similarity of thinking that the participants should have due to the new public management, which is based on a business approach to provide public services in Latvia which stresses the significance of the dialogue in communication. Entrepreneurs consider that there is only one formula for success, taken from the developed countries – the government has to sit at the same table with the biggest business organizations and generate ideas. Politicians and state officials agree on it, but it seems that the dialogue is a more complicated model of communication than they expected. This shows how difficult it is to build mutual understanding and how helpful an effective dialogue could be.

The last article presented in the book, **“The interaction of media and public policy participants in the discourse of problem construction”**, discusses the interaction between the media and public policy participants, its particularities in the discourse of problem construction based on a framing concept. Therein, a problem is presented as a controversial discourse among the participants that is employed in order to cause irreversible changes in the participants’ interaction, and a possible redistribution of power in a discourse network that also determines the particularities of (collective) problem frame construction. It is also highlighted that the media and public policy participants, while treating a problem and its frames differently, change a linear framing process that usually covers a selection, a definition, an evaluation and the provision of recommendations for the aspects of a problem. It involves the development of a three-step interpretation (problem comprehension, problem identification, problem development/narratives framing), that not only affects the problem

treatment and its conveyance, but also the interaction between participants, as well as the context of the problem construction. In order to ground the change of the participants' interaction and framing process, a theory of political economy is employed that is based on the premise that the entrenchment of market elements in the media and the public policy participants' network ideologically distort a problem's frame and power relations among the participants.

The book is based on the concept of strategic communication and its increasing importance in the processes of new public governance. The strategic communication approach applied in the construction of the chapters and the entire frame of the book stresses the main aspects of effective communication that could be applied by the participants of public governance in order to reach mutual understanding and their goals.

The authors and the editors of the book hope that explicit presentation and discussion on the importance of communication in the processes of public governance will ensure improvement of the interaction among participants of public governance and will lead to the achievement of mutually beneficial collaborations, especially in decision-making processes.

*Editors: Dr. Renata Matkevičienė, Dr. Andris Petersons*

# TRUST IN GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS IS THE MAIN REQUIREMENT FOR EFFECTIVE NEW PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

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Why is it important to analyse trust in governmental institutions? Public management includes a variety of public sector organisations, their relationships with stakeholders and public policy processes. In particular, the communicative processes (one-way or two-way) shaped by the communication culture could be seen as performance indicators, according to the new system approach to public management analysis.

Information technologies shape the communication processes: citizens and stakeholders can be engaged to some extent in public discussions and decision-making processes. In turn, these processes change the communication actions of new public management from one-way communication to “two-way”. It could be found that some believe that “this scenario may result in a reduction in the level of communicative interaction between citizens and bureaucrats” (Bovens and Zouridis, 2002 by Welch, Hinnant, Moon (2005, p. 372).

The essential requirement for democracy is the efficiency of the interaction between governmental institutions and citizens. Successful cooperation depends on trust, which leads to effective communication between public sector organisations and citizens.

The efficiency of communication activities depends on the information that is available for the participants in new public management processes. One of the information sources for stakeholders that encourages participation in discussions and debates is media. Modern IT helps to create conditions for more active involvement

for citizens in public management processes. Certainly, these interactions are based on the confidence in public sector institutions, understanding the shared interests between individuals and those institutions, and the importance of the possibility for participation in decision-making processes. Largely, the transparency of public sector organisations in their activities, communication actions and interactivity creates trust and constructs the extent to which citizens participate in decision-making, but as well, as a few scientists state, participation of citizens in the public management processes mostly depends on the situation in the country. According to Catterberg and Moreno (2005), during periods of economic turmoil (...) democratic stability requires citizens to have sufficient trust in economic and political institutions to accept temporary economic straits in return for the promise of better conditions in some uncertain future (Catterberg, Moreno, 2005, p. 32).

In this article, the issue of trust will be addressed – why trust is important in new public management and what determines a decline in trust, including identification of factors and communicative actions that ensure establishment and strengthening of trust between the different participants in public management.

Factors that could be used for the analysis of trust in governmental institutions were introduced as well.

The theoretical discussion presented in this article is supplemented by data from surveys conducted in 2016. The communication of governmental institutions on their websites was also analysed taking into account factors that influence trust and that are based on the communicative activities of governmental institutions.

## Discussion on the Concept of Political Trust

Trust as an object for scientific investigation can be found in various social sciences. In political sciences, trust can be related with civic engagement and political participation. In public relations and corporate communication, trust is related with building a mutual understanding based on relations and reputation, and in



economy and marketing disciplines, trust goes together with sales management, financial operations, branding, etc. Trust is the core element in health care and psychology.

As Blind (2006, p. 5) states, trust does not emerge, nor does it operate in a vacuum. To people, trust refers to confidence in each other as members of a social community. The concept of trust is based on social behaviour, which is more related with collective behaviour than individual behaviour. The reason for that is because collective behaviour is based on collective structures of understanding that are formed by values, norms, traditions and accepted by individuals.

Trust is complex communicative action that involves at least two participants: trustor, the one who trusts, and the trustee, the one who is trusted. Trust is constructed by both participants: their intentions, purposes, promises and interests that drive their actions. As it is the result of a two-sided communicative action where the trustor's communication actions are practically unpredictable, trust is also difficult to predict. Therefore, in several "trust" definitions, the concept of uncertainty is introduced. In trust relations there are two sides: the side that places trust and the side that is trusted. Numerous social researches have demonstrated that trust is a consequence of understanding a variety of social behaviours. For example, interpersonal trust could promote win-win solutions or the contrary, as in a prisoner-dilemma situation, as well as other games of social exchange (Tsfati, Cappella 2005, p. 252). For trust to be relevant, there must be a possibility not only for an expected positive communicative action, but also to react to the other's expectations by betraying shared norms that are agreed to be the basis for collaboration. As the concept of trust is related with human behaviour (it is not so important if it is an individual or group / collective behaviour), factors such as credibility, liability and honesty form the backbone for setting the trust in a relationship between people, groups of people and/or organizations.

Trust could be defined as the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest and cooperative behaviour based

on commonly shared norms (Fukuyama (1995) in Tsfaty, Cappella 2005, p. 252). Those norms could be the core values or questions that form and influence the communicative actions – like justice, moral and religion dogmas, as well as professional codes of ethics and standards.

There are several theoretical perspectives for analysing trust. In this article, two main perspectives will be discussed – micro and macro level approaches to trust.

- The micro-level approach is based on boosting confidence in the dependence on the individual, based on understanding and knowledge, constructed during the process of socialization on political, economic, social institutions, their interaction, and processes that occur in society. According to the micro-level approach, the concept of trust is based on a person's perception of direct or indirect personal experience and related to the activities an institution is concerned with, its efficiency and perception of trust, a person's interests, responses, i.e., the micro-level approach increases confidence while emphasising benefits for an individual and only after that to society. Of course, for an individual perception of trust, there is the impact to the interpretation of trust or mistrust in society as a whole, as it consists of individuals, each with his/her own understanding of a functioning political system, benefits and so on, while the perception of confidence and trust on the individual level influences trust in political institutions, political system, state, etc. An individual's perception of trust is conveyed by their communicative actions towards other individuals and in that way, it determines their interactions with other individuals, institutions and so on.
- The macro-level approach, according to Mishler and Rose (2001, p. 32), is more related with two different perspectives on trust – cultural and institutional theories and their interpretation of trust. As Mishler and Rose state, the cultural theories' understanding of trust stresses the outcome of national culture

and traditions, and there is very little space for the variation of trust among individuals within societies. As the authors state, in the perspective of cultural theories, “trust is based on long-standing and deeply imbedded beliefs about people that are rooted in cultural norms” (2001, p. 32) along with values, beliefs and traditions that are communicated through the socialization process and anchored in actions. From the perspective of cultural theories, trust is an extension of interpersonal trust, learned early in life and later projected onto various institutions (political, economic, social), which determines the performance capabilities of institutions (Mishler, Rose, 2001, p. 31). Macro institutional theories emphasize the aggregate performance of various institutions (political, economic, social) or a political system altogether in such matters as promoting growth and public welfare, effective governance and transparency in actions (including communicative actions). “Trust in institutions is rationally based; it hinges on citizen evaluations of institutional performance. Institutions that perform well generate trust, while untrustworthy institutions generate scepticism and distrust (...) insofar as political institutions persist and perform relatively consistently over successive generations, political socialization and institutional performance should exert very similar and reinforcing effects on trust in institutions” (Mishler, Rose, 2001, p. 31).

If the macro-level approach indicates that trust is an essential component, i.e., that the operation of a political system is based on trust or in other words, an institutions’ transparency and openness that are inherited from cultural norms and values of that particular society, the micro-level interests are related to the individual, i.e., his/her understanding of trust and confidence, which are dependent on a person’s attitudes, interests and actions that are formed during the socialization processes and are subsequently transferred to the public or macro-level.

Political trust may be associated with the political system and its functioning as well as with individual politicians. Trust can of-

ten be the result of various impressions, opinions and images that emerge in cooperative activities and dependent on the behaviour of politicians, political institutions or a political system as such. However, in civil society, greater attention is paid to the citizens' trust in public authorities. Confidence or trust in institutions may be determined by the scope of their activities and specific issues as well.

In most cases, political trust could be associated with the concept of organisational trust, which according to Miller (1974), refers to an issue-oriented perspective, whereas citizens become trustful or distrustful of government "because they are satisfied or dissatisfied with policy alternatives" (p. 951). As Blind (2006) states, the organizational political trust can be further subdivided into two categories: system-based trust and institution-based trust. System-based organisational political trust refers to the citizens' evaluation of the performance of the political system. While institution-based political trust is forwarded to particular political institutions; therefore, some scholars stress the specificity of that kind of political trust because it is associated with specific issues or particular institutions.

Of course, political communication scholars stress the growing importance of micro-level political trust; trust in individual political leaders that involves a person-oriented perspective when citizens become trustful or distrustful of a relevant political institution that is based on their approval or disapproval of certain political leaders (Blind, 2006, p. 4), their political views and statements, actions and communication activities.

In reference to various scientific researchers, the three main aspects that define trust could be named: trust as an interpersonal and organisational construct, trust as a behavioural pattern, and trust based on expectations.

- Trust is a complex interpersonal and organizational construct (Blind, 2006, p. 3). The awareness of trust reflects beliefs about the trustworthiness of another person (or group, or institution). Trust is a relational construct that involves a personal decision on making a person vulnerable to another person. As

some authors state, trust is mostly unconditional; it is given to certain individuals or institutions over specific domains. Trust judgments are expected to impact courses of action: distrust, for example, may motivate the monitoring of a relationship, uncooperative behaviour, etc. (Levi, Stoker, 2000, p. 476), while trust could lead toward collaboration and support that are crucial, especially in conflict and crisis situations that occur with an individual, in groups or within institutions.

- Trust is based on comparison, on monitoring, and the evaluation of behaviour. Blind (2006) comments on political trust based on psychological reasoning: “people search for sincerity and truthfulness in the personality, public appearances, speeches and behaviour of their political leaders” (Blind, 2006, p. 5). This means that political trust involves an assessment made on person’s moral, ethical values and beliefs associated with a certain government, political institution and/or individual political leaders. And as the author claims, it involves even more – political trust involves an interest-based calculation when citizens evaluate whether the government and/or political leaders act in accordance with their party members’ agenda and with a citizen’s expectations as stated before.
- Meeting expectations is the key factor in being trusted. Trust develops over time: trust can be earned with successful results in decision-making and the communicative actions of political leaders or institutions. On the contrary, if the decisions and actions of political leaders or institutions repeatedly demonstrate a lack of credibility, it results in distrust. As Blind (2006) states, every organizational action and policy is also a potential act towards building trustworthiness (2006, p. 4). In some theoretical works, the attributes of trust are detailed as such: trustworthiness, fairness, worthiness of pride, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, compassion, honesty and competence (Camaj, 2014, p. 192). According to Blind (2006), “trust occurs when parties holding certain favourable perceptions of each other al-

low this relationship to reach the expected outcomes” (2006, p. 3). In other words, political trust is a judgment of the activities of political leaders and political institutions made by citizens based on their understandings, feelings and expectations toward political actions and communicative activities, political characters and institutions.

Reflection on the theoretical analysis of the concept of political trust can lead to a set of several key factors that influence trust, such as political processes and political participation experience, economic development, professionalization and professionalism, and communication strategies.

- During a period of extreme changes in a political system (in the case of most post-communist countries including Lithuania and Latvia), society is not always capable of adapting to the ongoing changes in the political system. During the first years of independence, politicians and political institutions usually take substantive decisions that influence a country’s economic development, formation of a political system inside the country, setting relationships with neighbour countries that leads to the development of the political system, and ensuring the effective running of various political institutions, which usually results in the introduction of an adequate political and societal framework. Such decisions are usually associated with political, economic, social development and growth, along with the target end result – the welfare of the society. Later, when the system is consolidated, political institutions no longer accept extremely important decisions that set the establishment of the state. To the contrary, political and governmental institutions make decisions to establish a certain political ideology, to promote specific political interests and so on. Therefore, the society is no longer satisfied with the performance of political leaders and political institutions as they are not satisfying the public’s expectations. In the case of non-compliance between public expectations and the performance of political institu-

tions, it could lead to a growing distrust of political leaders, political institutions and in some aspects – the political system as a whole.

- Distrust in political institutions may be associated with the statement that the importance of political institutions is determined by the economic growth or economic prosperity of the country. Institutions are trusted or distrusted to the extent of the desired economic outcomes they produce. In post-communist countries, citizens are likely to value institutions that succeed in corruption reduction, removing restrictions on individual liberty, etc. In these contexts, popular trust in institutions is likely a consequence of both political and economic performance (Mishler, Rose, 2001, p. 36). Distrust in political institutions can be associated with political corruption and scandals which lead to distrust in political leaders, political institutions and the political system in general.
- Professionalism led by professionals and competence is yet another factor that can lead to trust or mistrust in political leaders and/or political institutions. As Brant (2013) states, competence has to do with the abilities and skills of political leaders and political institutions to do their job and the extent to which they take charge of problems (are they decisive, effective and efficient), and whether they know what is important to the people (Brants, 2013, p. 17). “Trust in politics is considered a prerequisite for the legitimacy of representative democracy and at the same time as the remedy when things go wrong” (ibid., p. 16–17). Two aspects of trust can be distinguished: reliability and competence related to integrity (are they honest, do they do what they promised, do they have good intentions) and whether they act in the public interest (are they responsive to the needs of people).
- Analysis of the comments of political commentators and editors and a survey of political communication research show

the growing importance and influence of professional communication activities (communication and public relations, media consultants) for trust or mistrust in political leaders and political institutions. It is believed that the increasing importance of image management and branding in the political arena backfires from both the media and society when there is mistrust in political leaders and political institutions by making assumptions that politicians and the activities of the political institutions are more concentrated on image formation, branding and political packaging, but not on decision-making to ensure public welfare.

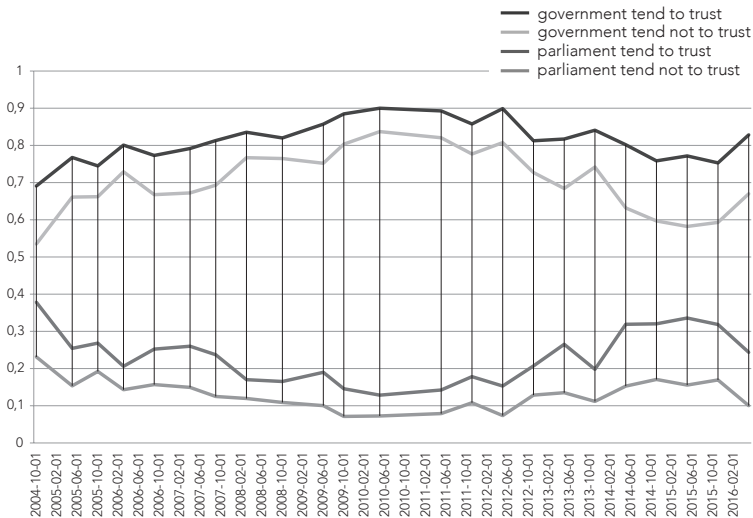
To sum up the discussion, trust could be analysed as a complex construct based on a person's behaviour and communicative activities. Trust is based on the interaction of various institutions and it is used as the main argument to deliver political programmes and proposed solutions for problems. Political trust is associated with the citizens' assessment of political leaders, political institutions as appropriate, inappropriate, or fair on the basis of one of the key criteria – compliance with promises.

### Declining Public Trust in Political Institutions

Trust in public authorities and politicians is one of the requirements of democracy: the representation of citizens is associated and dependent on the transfer of certain responsibilities to governmental institutions; as in any other way, the delegation of responsibility to act on behalf of the citizens would not be transmitted.

Some researchers state that trust is especially related with civic participation. It can be seen as the result of a citizen's voting behaviour. Increasing social trust is associated with increasing political participation, especially in the form of voting. Increased participation, in turn, is a generally accepted sign of political trust and democratization. It can also be seen as opposing opinions that result in distrust and encourage active political involvement in the form of social protest movements, etc. That constitutes a





Scheme 1. Trust in public sector institutions in LT (Trust in institutions. Public opinion in the European Union. Access on Internet: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/index#> [2016-10-05]).

sign of a working democracy in industrialized countries. (Blind, 2006, p. 6)

Various research on the participation of citizens shows the decline of trust in governmental institutions for several decades, and that that this decline can not only be seen in Lithuania (scheme 1), but across other democratic countries (Levi, Stoker, 2000, p. 481). Brants (2013) compares trust in governmental institutions in the EU and US, and he states that polls show that only around 20% of the US population trusts their government. However, Eurobarometer data shows slightly more positive results: around 30% of the EU population say they trust their government (Brants, 2013, p. 16). Some researchers on trust in legislative bodies state that a decline in trust can be observed in established democracies, but is very significant in many new democracies (Catterberg, Moreno, 2005, p. 35). The decline of trust in governmental institutions

offers some challenges to politicians and public administrators, and it could imply the loss of public confidence in political and administrative performance as well as dissatisfaction with public services (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005, p. 371).

### **Communication Activities are the Key Factors to Enhance Trust in Governmental Institutions**

As it was discussed in the previous chapter, political trust is crucial for a democratic society, as it links citizens to the political leaders and political institutions that represent the citizens, “enhancing the legitimacy and the effectiveness of democratic government” (Mishler, Rose, 2001, p. 30). As the authors claim, in new democracies, however, the political character of institutions can matter as much as their policies and political results, along with their economic performance. Considering the situation in post-Soviet countries where individual liberty was systematically repressed and the rule of law was a tool to consolidate the power of the Communist Party for several decades, citizens are likely to value institutions that succeed in reducing corruption, removing restrictions on individual liberty and providing increased freedoms. In these contexts, popular trust in institutions is likely a consequence of both political and economic performance (Mishler, Rose, 2001, p. 36).

Some statements could be found that indicate that economic instability and recession may contribute to the decline of public trust (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005, p. 374), but contrary to this, the performance of public authorities in those situations could strengthen the citizens’ trust in governmental institutions. When decisions are made on a timely basis, responsibly, and with clear communication, these could be main factors for building confidence, especially in those cases when the economic instability or crisis is not the direct outcome of political decisions. In various research (e.g. Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005), there is evidence that public trust in governmental institutions particularly declines as the public’s reaction to political scandal (e.g., corruption,

sex scandals, or failures in decision-making about public procurement), inefficient government performance (e.g., in a Lithuanian case, there's an example of "night decisions" by the Parliament), and policy failure (e.g., decisions that were not approved by society, like the impeachment of President R. Paksas) (2005, p. 374). Scholars attribute a decline in the public's confidence and trust in government to a variety of different reasons, such as economic crisis, political scandals, performance of governmental institutions, media discourse on governmental institutions, etc.

As Blind (2006, p. 23) states, trust in governmental institutions is a "complex mix of ideologies, experiences, stereotypes and images, comprising but not limited to the specific aspects of public sector organization and functioning". But according to political scientists, trust in governmental institutions is mostly related to the stability of governmental activities, and distrust in the "system of governments, by those who do not view it as legitimate, are supposedly more prone to anti-government activities". (Erber, Lau, 1990, p. 245) Trust can be seen as a basis for the evaluation of the activities of governmental institutions (Miller, 1974, p. 952), or on their political efficacy, which has been in decline for several decades (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005, p. 373).

In scientific literature, there are four areas that might be associated with the level of public trust, such as:

- governmental performance
- economic situation
- socio-cultural situation
- political situation (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005, p. 374).

These four areas directly or indirectly influence the public's trust in government: their causal relations with the level of public trust are not necessarily clear, as the public perception of trust is a cognitive reflection of the information concerning governmental performance. Welch, Hinnant, Moon (2005) state that citizens cognitively create a gap between their expectations and reality: if an individual is frustrated and disappointed with governmental

services, he/she is likely to report a low level of confidence in governmental services, while the opposite is true of those who are satisfied (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005, p. 374). Accordingly, trust is a subjective indicator of attitude rather than an objective indicator of the performance of governmental institutions.

The main factors that affect confidence in governmental institutions and create trust are openness, transparency, honesty, good intentions and professionalism.

### **Openness**

In recent scientific literature, there is concern about the communication between public authorities which could help to secure public support and public confidence (Ricci, Mcgowan, Venkataramani, 2013, p. 2), along with the underlying requirement of openness for governmental institutions.

Openness about anything and everything may be relevant to the citizens. It can concern everything from information about congestion on the roads to information about the level of crime in the region, including the activities and response time of public authorities, to the level of the information provided to the public about issues such as compliance with the requirements of hygiene in catering services, etc. The following information provided to citizens demonstrates the openness of the public authorities and their understanding of the needs of every citizen.

Openness can not only be associated with information that is provided to citizens, but also with the engagement of citizens in processes regarding the exchange of information, where citizens are provided with the opportunity to become involved in activities that are basically exclusive in governmental institutions: in taking advantage of various information technologies, citizens may be able to inform authorities about what they see and experience, what problems they meet, and address them to the governmental institutions. The involvement of citizens would not only allow authorities to obtain relevant data, but also encourage communities to be more active, as well as involve them in some decision-making processes.

As Galford states, “whether the issue is building trust anew or rebuilding it from a deficit position, people have to feel like nothing’s being hidden. And they have to know that their voices are being heard and considered” (Ricci, McGowan, Venkataramani, 2013, p. 2).

Thus, the openness of the governmental institutions not only shows the authorities’ desire to inform citizens about the activities carried out by providing relevant information, but also to engage citizens in collaboration with governmental institutions by encouraging them to provide information concerning various problematic issues and participate in decision-making.

### **Competence**

Trust is created based on the professionalism of public authorities, i.e., the ambitions and competence of governmental institutions. In particular, the formation of trust is associated with the intent of governmental institutions and their design of services that are orientated toward the needs of citizens, and how well these services should be delivered competently and in a professional way too. In order to gain and maintain trust, government entities must demonstrate their willingness to deliver services that are fashioned in the best interests of their customers and other stakeholders, and they must do it consistently and proactively (2013, p. 7).

Based on the indices of US National Election Studies (NES), the elements of openness, honesty, ethics, and integrity of governmental institutions could be emphasized: “How much of the time do you think you can trust the government (...) to do what is right? Do you think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes? Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people? Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked?” (Catterberg, Moreno, 2005, p. 33).

The openness and transparency of the activities of governmental institutions create the foundation for trust in public authorities. As Grimmlikhuijsen and Porumbescu state, the professional-

ism of governmental institutions is assessed by monitoring (1) the decision-making process, (2) the content of the policy making process, and (3) the consequences of the possible effects of policy decisions (Grimmlikhuijsen, Porumbescu, 2013, p. 576).

### **Good intentions**

Trust in any government entity depends on the entity's intentions. Is the government entity only watching out for its own interests, or is it watching out for its customers, too (2013, p. 9)? Good intentions are dependent on the characteristics of the previously identified features of the public authorities' activities such as openness, honesty and competence. However, the intentions and the use of appropriate communication by public authorities should reveal the authorities' ambitions and expected results, and should be orientated toward the citizens and their needs, with the authorities' actions aimed at meeting the expectations of citizens.

These assertions about the openness of governmental institutions not only facilitate greater involvement of the citizens based on their awareness, but also abolish the monopoly of the media when the public is kept updated about the activities of governmental institutions. The up-to-date, relevant and proactive communication of governmental institutions not only creates confidence, but also shapes the communication environment and traditions based on openness and proximity, which may influence the activity of citizens, especially in a more positive vein with a better assessment of the activities of governmental institutions.

In terms of trust in governmental institutions, it is worth paying attention to the very public display of confidence of other participants involved in the public management processes of the public authorities. Namely, how much governmental institutions are open and willing to not only involve citizens in various activities, non-governmental organizations and civic movements (as consultants, information providers and/or active observers of the environment), but also how much they are willing to delegate their functions to other participants in the public administration activities in this way, and not only in certain advisory (additional

or side) activities, but also by delegating or transferring responsibilities.

For research into the communicative engagement of Lithuanian governmental institutions, an analysis of corporate webpage content was made. The main argument for the investigation's hypothesis arose regarding how governmental institutions demonstrate their openness and use various IT tools to engage citizens in communicative activities and civic participation. For the analysis of governmental institutions, websites were chosen: the website of The President of the Republic of Lithuania, website of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, website of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and 14 ministries<sup>1</sup>.

For the research of the communicative activities that are used by governmental institutions to create and strengthen trust by demonstrating openness, competence and goodwill on their websites, the elements that create trust were examined based on the theoretical discussion:

- openness: information about the institution, organisational structure, contact information, information about activities,

1 The webpages that were analyzed: webpage of the President of the Republic of Lithuania (<https://www.lrp.lt/lt>), webpage of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://www.lrs.lt/>), webpage of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (My Government, <https://lrv.lt/>) and ministries: Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://www.am.lt/VI/index.php>); Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://enmin.lrv.lt/>); Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://finmin.lrv.lt/>); Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania ([http://kam.lt/lt/titulinis\\_1220.html](http://kam.lt/lt/titulinis_1220.html)); Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://lrkm.lrv.lt/>); Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://www.socmin.lt/lt/titulinis.html>); Ministry of Transport and Communications (<http://sumin.lrv.lt/>); Ministry of Health of The Republic of Lithuania (<http://sam.lrv.lt/>); Ministry of Education and Science of The Republic of Lithuania (<http://www.smm.lt/>); Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://www.tm.lt/>); Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://ukmin.lrv.lt/>); Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://www.urm.lt/>); Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://vrm.lrv.lt/>); The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (<http://zum.lrv.lt/>). Investigation was made in July - September, 2016.

information about the legislative activities of organisations and the possibility to participate in the discussion of legislative activities, invitations to participate in discussions and meetings with officials, possibilities to write a letter, or to provide a comment.

- competence: “one window” principle for the services for citizens, presentation of competence (certificates, awards, greetings), information provided by partner institutions to show the scope of the activities, and network collaboration.
- goodwill: Q/A section, information that encourages people to apply for consultation, projects that involve citizens, references that are related with the activities of governmental institutions and could be important for citizens.

Data received during the research shows that governmental institutions are focused on one-way communication with the citizens (table 1). On the websites, information about the top level public officials, institutional structure, their activities and main contacts are provided. Moreover, information about the legislative activities of governmental institutions is provided as well (it should be noted that this information is provided within links to the official databases of legislative documents).

The openness of the governmental institutions could not only be released with the provision of contact information, but with the opportunities that are provided for citizens and all stakeholders to become involved in the interaction with governmental institutions. The research data shows that on the governmental institutions’ websites, the possibility to comment on projects of legislative documents, to get involved in discussions or to be invited to participate in public debates or meetings are very rare. Places where the stakeholders can comment on legislative documents or the activities of governmental institutions could be found in 29% of the websites and these possibilities are not provided on the main pages, but best found in 2<sup>nd</sup> level webpages. IT creates possibilities to provide discussion forums, but it does not change the real places where various stakeholders could meet with the



	OPENNESS				COMPETENCE		GOODWILL		TOTAL	
	information, %	information (only 1 level), %	engagement, %	engagement (only 1 level), %	%	competence (only 1 level), %	%	goodwill (only 1 level), %	%	total (only 1 level), %
total:	88.24	28.24	50.59	24.71	56.86	35.29	61.76	20.59	65.4	26.64
governmental institutions	12.94	2.35	10.59	3.53	7.84	3.92	5.88	1.47	9.69	2.77
ministries	75.29	25.88	40	21.18	49.02	31.37	55.88	19.12	55.71	23.88

Table 1. Communicative tools used in webpages of governmental institutions to create and strengthen trust.

governmental institutions; but on the governmental institutions' webpages, those possibilities are not applied – with only 1/5 of the institutions providing an invitation for discussions as well as for public discussions.

During recent years, the corruption in governmental institutions has been an important topic that is discussed in governmental institutions as well as in public discourse (mostly because of the media). On the main governmental institutions' websites, banners with “hot lines” phone numbers are published to inform those accessing the sites about corruption cases in governmental institutions (half of the institutions (47%) provide those banners, but few of them provide those banners on the main page, others – on second level webpages).

The involvement of various stakeholders into communicative activities with governmental institutions could be based on services that are important for the stakeholders, and also on services that are provided on the governmental institutions' websites, i.e., all documents and information about the institutions' activities (around 70%), Q/A sessions (less than 60%), and links to a more detailed presentation of related material (more than 80%).

Alongside material related to the activities of governmental institutions, presentations of the public authorities' competences appear: important meetings, signed agreements, network collabo-

ration – this type of information is provided on less than 30% of the websites of governmental institutions.

Another aspect that shows the governmental institutions' competences is information about the partnership network that is provided on 70% of the websites.

To sum up the results of the website investigation, there are particularly discouraging communicative activities of governmental institutions that could be stressed: domination of a one-way flow of information about the institutions' structure and legislative activities, as well as a lack of effort to provide communicative services for the stakeholders (links, comments, document forms, etc.), but the limited information about competences and partnership networks is noted.

In conclusion to sum up what was discussed before, public satisfaction with governmental institutions is an outcome of both public expectations and the perception of governmental performance (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005, p. 374). There are different factors involved in the dimensions of perception and expectation that jointly affect the level of public satisfaction with governmental performance. As Welch, Hinnant, Moon (2005) point out, the public often has the wrong information and a biased perception of the performance of governmental institutions. According to them, the initial level of public expectation and biased public perception of governmental performance could lead to the decline of public trust in government or to paraphrase it – distrust is a rational response by individuals to the performance of institutions.

As trust is particularly based on the communicative actions of governmental institutions, the relevancy of the information provided and effectiveness of information flow management between the public authorities and citizens affect the public's trust.

The diffusion of information technologies throughout society and an increasing stream of information from the government to the public, according to Welch, Hinnant, Moon (2005), may help to correct this biased public perception and affect the expectations of trust by narrowing the information gap between the public and governments (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2005, p. 375).

## Conclusions or Discussion about two-way communication challenges for Governmental Institutions

Lately, governmental institutions are becoming strongly affected by the attention coming from society. There is a demand for media to provide comprehensive and accurate information that is interesting and relevant to the public, and direct responses (mostly by using new technologies) from citizens who are involved in communication with governmental institutions has added to this also.

In the final analysis it can be said that new technologies were developed by governmental institutions as an opportunity to communicate with public directly while avoiding the communication medium (moderator or bridge). Failures and threats in communicative activities depend on ill-preparation or the closeness of governmental institutions. An assumption like this is not a rebuke to the governmental institutions, but it is more the fact which appears from the changes that influence the communication processes between governmental institutions and other members of society. And with this in mind, it should be noted that while considering the fact that governmental institutions started to use information technologies to communicate with citizens and other stakeholders and to also provide services for them, there is one thing missing. Such activities as the effective involvement of citizens into the communication processes and any form of discussions, whether recommendations, comments, and the publication of information about sightings of phenomena, events and so on. This need for communication about the activities of public authorities demands certain requirements for the communicative activities of governmental institutions. This type of communication not only requires two-way communication, i.e., not only the capability to listen to opinions, but to take them into consideration as well as the active engagement of national authorities to appropriately react is necessary.

Confidence is a complex long-term process which is driven by institutions in their assessments and the speeches, appearances and actions of political representatives and participants associ-

ated with the government. Therefore, all these factors play a major role in the assessment of all governmental institutions and the sense of a political system as well.

Although trust is not a new concern for governmental institutions, political representatives and participants, new requirements and challenges arise in the light of new public management. Not only does the need to enhance the development of information technology emerge in order to encourage citizens to participate in public administration, but at the same time, new specific requirements for governmental institutions appear. While trying to maximize transparency and open communicative activities, the mere publication of information updates and decisions is no longer sufficient. This is where two-way communicative activities appear to play an important role, especially in cases when the stakeholders are engaged in new public management processes.

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# PUBLIC GOVERNANCE: POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

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In a democratic society, the activities of public administration are effective if its aims are clear and a majority of the public approves of them. That requires public participation in the decision-making processes, as well as informing the public about them. One way to do this is to involve non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in public administration, since NGOs have at least two important roles in a democratic society: first – NGOs aggregate and mediate public opinion for formulating public policy; second – NGOs inform the public and often serve as an instrument of policy implementation (Reeder, 1999).

In order to understand the role of NGOs in public governance, the author has studied tendencies of the public administration and NGOs in relation to transformation during several stages of state reform development in the restored Republic of Latvia. The author has also examined the NGO's activities during the Soviet times in Latvia, which has helped to mark a point of reference. Using qualitative research methods – content analysis, discourse analysis and expert interviews, the object of this research is to define two main vectors of NGO activities in public governance: NGOs as an equivalent public administration partner and NGOs as a promulgator of public protest.

In analysing the Latvian government's adopted normative documents, the paper explores changes in the place and positions of the NGOs in public administration decision-making processes as well as in the creation of public governance, and what the opportunities are for NGOs to engage in Latvian public administration

decision-making. Based on Latvian NGOs, public administration expert opinions and statistical data, the article examines the influence of NGOs in public administration decision-making concerning how public policy and public communication is developed to promote the participation of NGOs in public governance and what the impact of NGO participation is in the public decision-making process and in the formation of public governance. Subsequent research issues could be related to what the optimal NGO and public administration relations paradigm in the formation of public governance should be, and to what extent NGOs can activate the community by reducing the low participation and lack of public confidence in public administration.

### Toward NGO involvement in Latvian public administration

In totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, NGOs are formed and strictly controlled by state authority. The role of NGOs is brightly characterised by the slogan: “Trade-unions – the party’s gear-chain”. During the Soviet times in Latvia, medical institutions and also recreation centres, where various amateur hobby groups flourished, were under the authority of trade unions. In totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, part of the state administration functions could be assigned to NGOs. However, state authority is ideologised and the connection between state authority and NGOs is a one-way communication model, because only the prevailing party controls both information access and freedom of association.

In a democratic society, the relationship is more complex. The public administration, political parties, NGOs and society are basically built on the two-way communication model. Still, it has to be understood that in a democratic regime, the political authority may also not consider society’s or at least the majority’s opinion, when making decisions and forming social policy. Thus, there are cases when the one-way communication model occurs. In other words – in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, the functions of public administration can be assigned to NGOs, while strictly



defining the framework of their functions and without the power to influence the decision-making processes of the state authority. In a democratic society, the relationship between state authority and NGOs, which have been delegated part of the realization of state administration functions and that are involved in the public administration decision discussion processes, proceeds in their interaction, including public debate, where the aim is to achieve rational agreement between publicly competitive opinions openly, and on the basis of public interests.

However, it is important to point out that in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, NGOs can develop as one of the forms of protest – a resistance movement that incites changes in a revolutionary way. When analysing the independence restoration processes of Latvia, as well as the role of the Popular Front of Latvia (PFL) and of other NGOs during those processes, the differences between the activities of NGOs and political parties become clear, including such displays in the NGOs activities that have a formal resemblance to those of political parties. The Popular Front of Latvia was established as a public, i.e. non-governmental organisation, and initially, it did not position itself as a political party. However, the PFL later undertook a form of activities that are characteristic of parties – participation in the elections and the struggle for political power. After gaining a majority at the Supreme Council of the Soviet Socialistic Republic of Latvia, the PFL started to overtake the control of public administration from above, although NGOs usually join the public administration from below. After gaining this political power, the PFL faction at the Supreme Council broke up quite soon. Several new political parties formed on its basis and they gained political power in 1993 at the elections of the 5<sup>th</sup> Saeima (the Parliament of Latvia). But the PFL stayed out of the parliament, out of political power and does not continue to work as a NGO. The role of the PFL as a NGO in the conditions of the soviet regime, when it used non-forcible resistance methods – is considered, from its actions, the Third Revival of Latvia. This reveals historical and socially political tendencies that characterise the role of NGOs in a civil

society as remonstrants and public activators. Thus, it is possible to define two main vectors of NGO activities: NGOs as an equivalent public administration partner and NGOs as a promulgator of public protest.

In Latvia, the formalisation process of relations between NGOs and state authority started after the restoration of independence. A new post for the Minister of State Reforms was formed in the first government that gained the confidence of the 5<sup>th</sup> Saeima. This Ministry developed the “Latvian State reform concept” (Latvijas Valsts reformu koncepcija, 1995), where one of the aims of the state reforms was to promote the involvement and personal interest of people in the public administration processes, as well as to ensure that society had the possibility to receive current and accurate information on the public administration issues. The Cabinet of Ministers passed this concept in 1995.

The government reverted to the NGO and state authority relations formalisation process six years later, when the Cabinet of Ministers passed two important documents: “The guidelines of policy planning” (Politikas plānošanas pamatnostādnes, 2001) and “The guidelines of government communication policy” (Valdības komunikācijas politikas pamatnostādnes, 2002, 2008). These stated society’s participation in the government decision-making processes and the formation of society’s insight on public administration issues. Since 2014, the participation of NGO issues are defined by the “Public Administration Policy Development Guidelines” (Valsts pārvaldes politikas attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014.–2020.gadam, 2014). In 2003, the Latvian government passed amendments in the Cabinet’s rules of order, which envisaged that a representative of an NGO would have adviser rights and would be able to collaborate at the meetings of the Secretaries of State (Ministru kabineta kārtības rullis, 2003). Since 2009, a new form of participation has been introduced – discussion papers or the so-called, green paper. It provides the opportunity to get acquainted with the draft legislation at an early stage of the development of the document – at least 14 days before its submission at the State Secretaries’ meeting (Sabiedrības

līdzdalības kārtība attīstības plānošanas procesā, 2009). This form of participation is significantly expanding and strengthening the participation of NGOs in the public administration decision-making process.

From 2002 to 2009, the formalisation processes guiding the relationship between the state authority and NGOs were entrusted to a particular, specially formed institution – the Secretariat of Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration. There were two very important documents developed by the secretariat and passed by the government that have to be mentioned: the state policy planning document “The basic guidelines of civil society” (Pilsoniskās sabiedrības stiprināšanas politikas pamatnostādnes, 2005) and the state’s program “Consolidation of civil society” (Pilsoniskās sabiedrības stiprināšanas programma, 2008). Now these issues are within the competences of the Ministry of Culture of Latvia, which monitors and implements the objectives of “National identity, civil society and integration policy guidelines” (Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes).

When analysing the formation process for relations between the government and NGOs, it is also necessary to mention “The Memorandum of cooperation between NGOs and the government” (Nevalstisko organizāciju un Ministru Kabineta sadarbības memorands, 2014) that was signed by 57 NGOs and Prime Minister Aigars Kalvītis on March 2005. By 2016, 404 NGOs have joined and become parties to this memorandum. However, it should be noted that overall, 16,259 NGOs have been registered by the Register of Enterprises of Latvia (Biedrību un nodibinājumu reģistrēšanas dinamika, 2016), thus, it can be concluded that the initiative to engage in dialogue with the government has only been demonstrated by 2.4% of the NGOs, which are to be regarded as one of the most active and better organized components of Latvian civil society.

The aim of the memorandum is to promote the effective operation of state administration for public benefit, and to ensure the involvement of civil society in the decision-making processes.

In 2006, the Saeima (the Parliament of Latvia) also passed “The Declaration on the Development of civil society in Latvia and cooperation with NGOs” (Deklarācija par pilsoniskās sabiedrības attīstību Latvijā un sadarbību ar nevalstiskajām organizācijām, 2006). With this document, the improvement of cooperation between the parliament and NGOs was intended in regards to legislation issues. Thus, a clear framework on how NGOs are involved in the public administration decision development and making processes was defined in those laws and regulations.

Another government and society interaction mechanism, which aims to provide public administration decision-making in accordance with the public’s interests and its needs, is to consult with NGOs during the development of laws and regulations. In this field, the participation of NGOs continues to grow in Latvia. For example, in 2010, the ministries developed 1,374 draft legal acts and policy planning documents and among them, 239 or 17% of the projects and papers were developed in working groups where an NGO representative was included. 159 or 12% of the projects and documents were discussed in advisory councils with the participation of NGOs, and 267 or 19% of the projects and document were developed by involving NGO representatives as experts. NGOs provided reviews for 552, or 40% of the projects and documents (Nevalstisko organizāciju un Ministru kabineta sadarbības memoranda īstenošana, 2010).

But in 2015, the ministries developed 1,152 draft legal acts and policy planning documents, and among them, 266 or 23% of the projects and papers were developed in working groups that included an NGO representative. 164 or 14% of the projects and documents were discussed in advisory councils with the participation of NGOs, and 246 or 21% of the projects and document were developed by involving NGO representatives as experts. NGOs provided reviews for 716 or 62% of the projects and documents (Nevalstisko organizāciju un Ministru kabineta sadarbības memoranda īstenošana, 2015). Thus, NGO initiatives and their participation in governmental decision-making is relatively high and has continued to grow. The forms of NGO participation in Latvian

public administration have been developed as follows: advisory councils and working groups in ministries, public discussions, conferences, educational events, informative seminars, as well as the participation of ministry representatives in NGO activities.

Activity / Year	2010		2015	
The ministries prepared draft regulations.	1374		1152	
Draft regulations were developed in working groups where an NGO representative was included.	239	17%	266	23%
Draft regulations were discussed in advisory councils with the participation of NGOs.	159	12%	164	14%
Draft regulations were developed by involving NGO representatives as experts.	267	19%	246	21%
The NGOs submitted reviews on draft regulations.	552	40%	716	62%

Table 1: Participation of NGOs in the development of draft regulations (Nevalstisko organizāciju un Ministru kabineta sadarbības memoranda īstenošana, 2010, 2015)

NGOs are also involved in the decision development and making processes at various Ministries. Already in 1997, the Ministry of the Interior was one of the first ministries that had formed a consulting council with the participation of NGOs. Cooperation with NGOs also occurs in local municipalities, and several of those have formed consulting councils with the participation of NGOs. Often they are formed for a special purpose or field, for example, the consulting council of the Riga City Council Environmental Fund. When studying the role of consulting councils of ministries and local municipalities, it can be concluded that their functions, activities and content are very different from each other, which is often explained by the various particularities of the institutions.

A consulting council that has been formed at the Ministry of Environment can be classified as a well-supplied council by the state administration and can be called a clear process. Its aim is to involve the public in the decision-making processes concerning environmental issues and to develop the exchange of cooperation

and information in the field of environmental protection. Every year, the council organises a forum for environmental NGOs, where the current issues are discussed with the participation of state institutions, including all environmental public organisations and professional associations in Latvia (Vides konsultatīvā padome, 2016).

While studying laws and regulations that identify relations between NGOs and the public administration, it is important to conclude the aim of those documents. The tendency is as follows – on the basis of rules that are known to and understood by all of society, the NGOs have an ensured role as an equivalent partner in public administration. However, analysing NGOs and public participation in Latvia, many researchers point to the fact that the Latvian society “in relation to self-assessment in terms of the effectiveness of public participation, this manifests itself in the perception that democracy is exercised as an asymmetric communication process in which the public has vast opportunities to express its opinion, but no feedback follows from the political elite” (Nikišins, Rozenvalds, Zepa, 2014). It also recognizes that those laws and regulations indicate a common trend in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe where the government, not the society in general or NGOs, strives to be a promoter of the public initiative and its participation in decision-making processes. “Many Central and Eastern European governments have tried to develop an adequate legal and institutional framework for the NGO sector (Romania, Poland, Hungary, Lithuania), but initially there seemed to be an undue emphasis in forming NGO/Government partnerships, in which NGOs were funded from the state budget (International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, undated) and operated with a high degree of government oversight” (Palubinskas, 2009).

The cooperation between NGOs and the public administration proceeds within the formal framework clearly set by regulating documents that ensure the participation of NGOs in the public administration processes. Thus two aims are achieved – NGOs have guaranteed rights to take part at the decision-making pro-

cesses, but the public administration achieves the effective involvement of NGOs in those processes. This raises high requirements for NGO professionalism. It can be concluded that on the level of political will, several governments of Latvia have declared their position on NGO participation in the public administration, and laws and regulations of various levels has been passed for ensuring this. A good practice has also already been developed, but overall, a fairly small part of society is involved in the decision-making processes in Latvia.

### **NGOs in public governance: from partner of public administration to public activator and remonstrant**

However, when analysing the place of NGOs in current social and political processes in Latvia, it becomes clear that this vector of activity, when an NGO as a participant in the realisation of a public administration function is involved in decision-making in accordance with the interests of some public group, it is not the only one. The other vector of an NGO's activities becomes apparent as a protest against political and/or administrative decisions, when NGOs are a public activator and former of public opinion. In this case, the protest act is not related to a disregard of laws and regulations and violation of public policy. This kind of protest is not characterised by forcible campaigns.

Thus, the tendency of those NGOs activities is clearly seen not only during revolutionary changes in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. For example, it could be seen during the time of the Revival of Latvia. It also exists in democratic regimes, and moreover, across a wide range: from the legal way to picket, demonstrations and even civic disobedience. In particularly critical cases, NGOs act as remonstrants, trying to change or delete some decision made by the state administration and by attracting public attention with radical methods.

Several situations of crises in Latvia can be mentioned, when under public pressure, some changes are (or are not) made by the public administration. This pressure can show itself as a strike,

demonstration or other particular protest campaign that has the typical power of a communicative act. For example, a protest campaign by nurses, asking for a higher salary. During this campaign, one of the participants impersonated death with a scythe holding a poster saying: “Nurses will go away; I will come instead of them!” The activists of an environmental protection club captured a sea platform during their protest campaign against the Butinge oil terminal.

It is paradoxical, but in this case, an NGO’s protest can be considered as an attempt to find public consensus. The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas’ communicative action theory (Habermas, 1987) explains it. Communicative activities at their root are directed at delivering a message, but their functions – to discussion, because their aim is to turn the message into an object of public discussion and to reach a consensus. The message is delivered in a particular way through symbolically verbal or non-verbal acts (in the campaign of nurses by using the character of death with a scythe, the “capturing” of the Butinge oil terminal by the activists of an environmental protection club), and by using them, we can understand and control both general processes in society and the activities of particular people.

An explanation of non-governmental organizations as a public activator is found in the theory of non-violent resistance, whose founders are Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, who in his work “Stride Toward Freedom” writes that: “The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through non-cooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of a beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness” (King, 1958). If the keywords chosen by “the sense of moral shame” and “consensus” (which can be created through the community), then it is possible to speak not about the resistance, but the opportunity and rights of a civil society to attract public attention, using particular campaigns, to some phenomenon or process, or to change the ori-



entation of a society's values. In the mass communication process, an NGO's ability to attract media and public attention to their activity is often a decisive factor, which determines the impact of NGOs in the political or/and administrative decision-making process as well as in creating society's values, trying through public discussions to reach consensus. As Thomas H. Davenport and J. C. Beck wrote: "Attention is focused mental engagement on a particular item of information. Items come into our awareness, we attend to a particular item, and then we decide whether to act" (*Davenport, 2002*).

The dualism of the NGOs' activities is stated by the fact that on the one hand, they participate with the public administration as a partner, as representative of an interest group, with the aim to achieve some particular decision, considering the interests of this particular group. On the other hand, NGOs can play a role of an idea multiplier of a particular group. In that case, using various methods, that sometimes verge on a scandal, to provide the interest of the mass media and to gain publicity for the problem, NGOs take part in a public, rationally critical debate, and their aim is to not only change some decision of the public administration, but also the public's value system.

## Conclusions

During various historical, social and political conditions, the importance and proportion of every NGO's activities vector forms a particular pattern of public administration and NGO relations. Both the importance and proportion of every vector and the opinion of the state administration and non-governmental organisations determine tendencies that influence the transformation of relations, which express themselves as changes in the legislation, political culture, public opinion and mass media.

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# E-PARTICIPATION IN NEW PUBLIC GOVERNANCE: NGO ACTIVITIES FOR CIVIL PARTICIPATION

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New Public Governance (NPG) emphasizes the citizen empowerment aspect in decision-making and consideration processes. The most important tasks of NPG, besides improving the quality of decision-making and consideration, are the development of **new forms of sociality, civil society and organizational structures**. Various organizations (public organizations or NGOs) that are concerned with these tasks facilitate the creation of a favourable sphere for direct civil engagement and participation in forming the objectives of public decisions and carrying out public programmes and projects (Guogis, 2009; Raipa, Buškevičiūtė, 2011). New Public Governance emphasizes a wider civil participation in governing, lively NGO activity, relationships between citizens, and relationships between citizens and the government (Guogis, Gudelis, 2003; Smalskys, Skietrys, 2008; Guogis, 2009). The main goal of NPG is to improve social relationships, social and civil participation, cooperation, mutual support and influence between decision-makers and citizens (or their groups). NPG has a special meaning in activating various segments of society and eliminating social exclusion. New Public Governance, directed to sociability and socialization, can be implemented through e-participation.

E-participation refers to the use of information and communication technology, which is utilised to strengthen political and civil participation by improving the communication between individuals and decision-makers. The point of e-participation is the inclusion of all concerned parties into a democratic decision process (Macintosh,

Whyte, 2006; Romsdahl, 2005; Albrecht et al., 2008). In this case, all concerned parties means NGOs, private or governmental institutions, citizens and their groups. These concerned parties directly participate in the decision-making process and stimulate other forms of civil initiatives by preparing projects, organizing surveys, meetings and the public analysis of petitions or other important issues (Ferree et al., 2002; Smalskys, Skietrys, 2008; Smalskys, 2010).

Even though New Public Governance and e-participation are different in their theoretical nature, these concepts are connected by the common goal of citizen empowerment. Accordingly, **the object** of this article is **the interrelation** of New Public Governance and e-participation, which is based on civil engagement and participation. The goal of this article is to explore the expression of civil participation in the context of New Public Governance and according to each particular NGO's activities, to define its connection between New Public Governance and e-participation use. The objective of the article is achieved by using scientific literature analysis, synthesis and comparative analysis, along with practical examples.

### Civil engagement and participation in the concept of New Public Governance

Civil engagement and participation in decision-making processes, particular projects and initiatives are analysed by connecting *social engagement* and *civic engagement*. *Social engagement* refers to civil participation in the activity of a particular organization (governmental, non-governmental, group, community, social network and others). Citizens are socially involved in these activities in order to strengthen some common social norms (moral, ethical, legal, religious and others) that are acceptable to civil society at a certain time. *Social engagement* is described as an activity in which individuals act and participate by carrying out their various social roles and developing respective relationships (Avison, McLeod, Pescolide, 2007). Social engagement is based on the empowerment of social identity that includes the unification of all the norms and features of the participating individuals (Blader, Tyler, 2009).

The participatory action that facilitates the strengthening of certain **social norms** in the context of *social engagement* is supplemented by *civic engagement*. According to Adler and Goggin (2005), civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future. Various types of civic engagement are distinguished according to the type of activity the individual is involved in: community work, collective effort, political engagement, social changes, volunteering (Adler, Goggin, 2005; Prohaska, Anderson and Binstock, 2012). Community work is related with volunteering in local communities, and the civic engagement stems from their cooperation or common effort in seeking to improve the standards of living in the social environment (Ekman, Amna, 2009). By engaging politically in terms of providing opinions, questions or comments to the decision-makers, citizens pursue the opportunities to become involved in the decision-making processes. According to Zlatareva (2008), *civic engagement* is **civil participation, partnership and empowerment**, when citizens coordinate their social interests with various organizations and participate in decision-making processes that have an impact on the life of citizens. A preliminary condition for the effectiveness of civic engagement is non-formal cooperative interaction and a strong *horizontal* relation between the members of society. Therefore, the essence of civic engagement is the opportunity provided for citizens to express their opinions. The main actors in civic engagement are NGOs that mobilize and engage citizens, and defend the interests of citizens in the processes of decision-making and consideration. In this case, the concept of civic engagement supplements New Public Governance, which emphasizes **new forms of sociality, civil society and organizational structures** that are designed for citizen engagement, participation and empowerment. The meaning of civic engagement and NGOs activities which are based on it leads to the realization of citizen empowerment accentuated by NPG. The following NGO activities based on civic engagement are community work, collective activities, political engagement, social exchanges, and volunteering (Adler, Goggin, 2005;

Prohaska, Anderson and Binstock, 2012). Community work is associated with volunteering in local communities. Social exchanges are reflected in the individuals' coherence to groups. In the presence of such individual coherence, citizens can collectively engage in the realization of common goals and the public expression of appropriate needs (Quan-Haase, Wellman, Witte, 2012). Collective participation, based on social – civic engagement, is meant to influence those who have the power to make final decisions.

## NGOs as a part of New Public Governance

NGOs fortify social contact and social politics by offering social services, assistance and engaging concerned parties in particular activities. The main goals of NGOs include the aspiration to express the needs of citizens, defend and represent the public interest, and to promote the diversity of opinions. NGOs also act as force for influencing policy and as a political socialization structure, which includes observing and reacting to rising tensions in society. They act as a mediator between the people and state to promote public rallies and demonstrations (Klokmanienė, Klokmanienė, 2014). **The contemporary activities of NGOs are formulated according to these NGO goals – mediation, representation and decision-making on public affairs. These activities require and involve other specific NGOs in their activities and realization<sup>2</sup>.**

Consequently, the general actions of NGOs to ensure civil participation are the collective actions of several institutions, which involve the coordination of interests, and solutions based on compromise. An increase in public consciousness in the field of important issues provides citizens with a sense of responsibility and stimulates their active engagement and participation

2 NGOs participate and provide services in the fields of environment, children and young people, culture, local communities, human rights/protection of equal rights, civil initiatives, sports, health/social issues, common interests or hobbies (Kraniauskas, 2013).

(Klokmanienė, Klokmanienė, 2014). According to the implementation of such activities, NGOs are recognised as participants in the system of New Public Governance. NGOs mobilize public opinion and come up with convincing arguments (Titley, 2005). NPG emphasizes various processes that affect the formation of a system of activities (Osborne, 2010). This means that NGOs promote civil engagement by creating interpersonal, inter-organisational processes of communication and strengthen the most important mechanism of resource allocation in NPG – inter-organisational communication and cooperation.

One of the tasks of NPG is the **creation of new forms of sociality**, which is revealed in the activities of NGOs and is observed in mediation, representation, and decision-making in public affair. The aim of NGOs in the context of NPG is defined as civil engagement and participation in decision-making processes or participation in any other projects or initiatives that require active civil participation. This condition calls attention to the task of **civil society** that is emphasized by NPG.

The essential functions of NGOs in participatory democracy in relations with governmental institutions are a) civil engagement in activities that are the result of their participation and b) aid for certain groups of citizens that need to have their voice heard. These functions of NGOs are implemented by using e-participation and that determines the latter task of NPG – **the development of organizational structures**.

### Interrelation between New Public Governance and E-Participation in the context of NGO activities

The e-participation concept defines three major requirements to address, which are *to inform, consult, and empower*. The theoretical meaning of these requirements provides detail about what activities or actions NGOs may use to inform, consult, and empower citizens. Because the theory of NPG does not contain any specific examples for measures to implement civil participation, the article emphasizes the theoretical aspect of the requirements associated



with e-participation. The latter requirement – citizen empowerment – is mostly concerned with the civil participation that is highlighted in NPG. E-participation complements civil participation by specifying particular areas of involvement, which indicate how civil participation can be implemented in the context of New Public Governance. In this case, e-participation points to how civil participation can be realized by NGOs in the fields of mediation, representation, and decision-making in public affairs.

The necessity for the provision of information includes the dissemination of information by NGOs on important issues. NGOs encourage citizens that usually do not come across this kind of accessible information by spreading this information.

The requirement for consultation indicates the limited two-way communication that NGOs use to gather statements and opinions. NGOs consult a wider range of engaged individuals within society and encourage discussions about issues that are important to them. Consultation includes discussions on issues that are relevant to society between NGOs and other participants. The issues that receive the most attention and are considered more often indicates which topics are the most important to the participants and therefore, highlight the problematic areas. The citizens are considered to be engaged when they participate in consultation activities conducted by NGOs such as: reception of public statements, NGO advisory and consideration discussions with other organizations about important societal issues, civil encouragement to consider questions that arise, answers to the queries of citizens, provision of expert opinions, and target group surveys. These activities carried out by NGOs related to consultation are a part of the NGOs' cooperation and mediation with decision-makers when the NGOs seek to establish a dialogue with other concerned individuals.

In the area of civil empowerment, active civil participation is encouraged and the facilitation of contributions from the bottom-up is supported, with consideration of their impact on decision-making processes about key public issues (Macintosh, 2004; Tambouris, Liotas, Tarabanis, 2007; Lee et al., 2011).

Citizen empowerment is also a type of activity carried out by NGOs, whose purpose is to attract the attention of the decision-makers so that the issues raised by citizens and their statements can receive the necessary acknowledgement (Albrecht et al., 2008). In regards to citizen empowerment, NGOs have the task of making offers that lead to cooperation, while seeking results that would differ from the starting positions of certain situations under different conditions.

Most Lithuanian authors (Klokmanienė, Klokmanienė, 2014; Platovas, Petrauskaitė-Kriauzienė, 2013; Baršauskienė, Butkevičienė, Vaidelytė, 2009; Šimašius, 2006) who analyse the positions of NGOs and the development of social contact in contemporary society, emphasize the implemented **functions, principles of activity and objectives** of NGOs. All these definitions include processes involving mediation and representation, which are not examined in detail and thus, determine the need to define and specify these processes. E-participation is a primary tool for NGOs in the field of New Public Governance, which is utilised to implement the target activities of mediation, representation, and decision-making in public affairs. Therefore, the definitions of mediation and representation are based on e-participation's emphasized dissemination of information, and activities aimed at consultation and citizen empowerment.

## Representation as a function of an NGO

Representation as a function implemented by NGOs means the representation of interests or active participation in social affairs. Such representation is carried out by organizations, which use various *campaigns, lobbying* and other methods when they defend a particular idea or some group's interests and seek to change public opinion or politics (Šimašius, 2006).

Active NGO campaigns can be identified as projects or initiatives which are based on active engagement and participation, because according to the type of activity they engage in (Platovas, Petrauskaitė-Kriauzienė, 2013), NGOs can:

- actively participate in the consideration of legislative proposals
- provide advice, conclusions or generalizations based on professional investigation into the activities of governmental and decision-making institutions
- adequately criticize the work and practices of politicians, employers, and media actions, which promote relevant provisions (for example, intolerance, discrimination)
- implement the observation and publicity of particular cases
- mediate or provide representation in the examination of particular cases concerning the liability of institutions.

As NGOs create or restore the connection between the state and citizens, either involves the voluntary active participation of citizens in the NGO's sector (Klokmanienė, Klokmanienė, 2014), and the activities listed above can be implemented by NGOs by engaging citizens and emphasizing their active participation through lobbying. The main tasks of NGOs in lobbying are: 1) transfer of the correct message, 2) presentation of information to the right people, 3) appropriate form of the presentation of information, 4) presentation of information at the right time, 5) the transmitted information must properly express or reveal the problem (Hrebena R. J., Thomas C.S, 2002). Although the campaigns and lobbying activities invoked by NGOs can be considered as a part of representation, these activities, according to their content, may correspond to mediation carried out by NGOs.

## Mediation as a function of an NGO

Mediation as a function implemented by NGOs is based on resources and coordination. These organizations are considered mediators, which provide information and help by coordinating the activity of the whole sector or the activity of organizations which work in a specific field. These organizations play an important role in being a link between NGOs and public authorities (Šimašius, 2007). NGOs not only mediate between citizens, but also create connections with government (state) and private organizations.

The role that concerns dealing with relations with the government and business involves *legal regulation of NGO activities, interest groups and lobbying, support and charity (raising funds)* (Matonytė, 2004).

*Legal regulation of NGO activities* in the context of the mediation and representation carried out by NGOs is based on inter-institutional cooperation. The relationships of NGOs with state authorities are regulated in the development statute of Lithuania regarding NGOs (2013-12-19, No. XII-717) 5th chapter “cooperation of government and municipal authorities and institutions with nongovernmental organizations”. This chapter also includes activities concerning the dissemination of information and consultation when cooperation between government and municipal authorities and institutions with NGOs is implemented:

- by providing information about planned methods for actions and cooperation by government and municipal authorities and institutions for the purpose of coordinating these actions with specific NGOs
- by consulting with NGOs and creating common working groups for the purpose of solving particular issues
- “Government and municipal authorities and institutions must consult according to the laws of Republic of Lithuania with NGOs, which submit written requests to coordinate with proposed legislation”.

An *Interest group* means a part of society, also known as a “general group”, which does not participate with NGOs activities directly, but is interested and connected with specific issues raised or problems (Klokmanienė, Klokmanienė, 2014). Because NGOs, in carrying out processes of mediation and representation, involve specific participants or their groups, it is appropriate to use the term “concerned” (group). In the broad sense, concerned groups are NGOs, whether governmental or private organizations, and citizens. NGOs use of *lobbying* to create relations with government institutions matches the earlier mentioned lobbying in the process of representation by NGOs.

NGOs involved in the activities of *support and charity (raising funds)* in relation with government or private institutions means the funding of NGO programs, projects and initiatives (development statute of Lithuania regarding NGOs, 5th chapter, 2013).

**Representation as a principle of NGOs** means active participation in forming and implementing public policy and ensuring the civil supervision of government” (Lietuvos NVO plėtros koncepcija, 2007). Public policy means the publicity, consideration and decision-making of important issues and problems (Furman, Šerikova, 2007) and also involves the question of increasing transparency of government activities. Therefore, the representation of NGOs regarding common interests and public sector organizations is related to the consideration and decision-making of important issues, dissemination of information, consultation and cooperation.

**Mediation as a principle of NGOs** means honest and well-intentioned sharing of needed information with partners, and if necessary, confidentiality of information is ensured. NGOs properly inform their sponsors, members, partners, clients and society about the goals of a particular activity, actions, priorities, achievements and experience (Lietuvos NVO plėtros koncepcija, 2007). In this case, information becomes enabling when it helps to gather concerned groups together and engage them in problem-solving processes.

**Representation as an objective of NGOs** is mentioned when NGOs seek to express citizens’ needs, and to protect and represent public interests. Another main objective of NGOs is to seek **to become a mediator** between the people, markets and the state (Klokmanienė, Klokmanienė, 2014).

**Thus, the perspectives of e-participation also include the activities of NGOs in the implementation of disseminating public information, citizen consultation and enabling society to participate, which are respectively assigned to NGOs involved in carrying out mediation, representation, and decision-making in public affairs.** The specific definitions of media-

tion and representation are formulated according to the meanings of representation and mediation as functions, principles and objectives, and their connection with the perspectives of e-participation.

**Mediation carried out by NGOs** means the results of activities involving the coordination of interests between government, private institutions, NGOs and citizens (their groups) by raising and debating particular problems. NGOs are mediators of negotiations between individuals (their groups) and decision-makers or in the field of NGO initiatives, projects with decision-makers (Corry, 2010).

**Representation carried out by NGOs** means representation of the interests of particular groups and the initiation of particular decisions in communicating and cooperating with decision-makers. The scope of this representation highlights issues raised by the participants about political and civil communication according to the scale of honesty, accuracy, completeness, viewpoint, diversity of opinions, and ideological tendencies (Dahlgren, 2005).

### Realization of NGO activities invoking e-participation

NGOs carry out mediation, representation and the consideration of public affair activities in the context of NPG that are based on inter-organizational and interpersonal communication, which is implemented by invoking e-participation. Service to citizens, strategic thinking, democratic action, good inter-institutional and inter-organizational cooperation (Guogis, 2009; Smalskys, 2010) are the main features of NPG that can be defined as the principles of successful NGO activity.

One of the main mediation activities carried out by NGOs is the aim to strengthen civil participation in active civil engagement and participation based projects. Public participation in government or social life is described as the activities of individuals and interest groups who prepare public discussions, reports and comments, and those who organize demonstrations, electoral campaigns and lobbying with the participation of NGOs, trade unions,

political parties and other public organizations. Only a country's residents (or associated groups) concentrated together can have a greater influence on government and decisions (Savivaldybių ir NVO bendradarbiavimas, 2013). Projects which are based on active citizen engagement and participation require practical citizen engagement by providing opinions, questions, responses to the questions, and information about such projects (entering relevant events, movements and so on). Such projects and initiatives are organized by various governmental and non-governmental organizations. Examples of such governmental institution initiatives are in the webpage "My Government", which is the internet gateway to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, an electronic service for the involvement of residents in the decision-making process. "E.citizen" and the website "ePolicija.lt" are websites on the internet where all Lithuanian residents can find and use the electronic services of the police. Every resident of Lithuania has the possibility to report criminal acts, traffic incidents and other law violations in an electronic way and get feedback from the police about the requested service. The actions of NGOs that encourage civil participation in the projects and initiatives of various organizations are: announcement of key public issues, information provided in social networks and media, consultation of citizens, encouragement of volunteering, common public social actions, and projects<sup>3</sup>. Announcement of public issues means the provision and dissemination of information in social networks and media. The distribution of information throughout social networks requires an area that is essential for that kind of spread of information – social networks, which are based on various e-communication tools. The spread of information in the media leads the way towards the spread of information in books, newspapers, journals,

3 NGOs can implement these actions by various e-communication methods and instruments. E-communication methods and instruments are: newsletters, SMS/MMS, instant message, video conference, "FAQ", websites, search systems, virtual communities, online discussion forums, "Wikis", "blogs", "podcasts", live broadcasting, e-mail, chat sites, online survey (one question), e-actions, e-petitions, e-campaigns, e-protests, e-voting, e-comments, alert service.

statements or other publications, including television and radio programs, cinema or other audio and video production and other sources that provide information (LR Visuomenės informavimo įstatymas, 2006). Actions based on the consultation of citizens are based on particular applications or tools by which civil society groups can achieve their goals by participating the process of dialogue (Ablačinskis, 2008). The encouragement of volunteering and common public social actions or projects include NGO activities which are based on civic engagement. Some examples of NGO projects and initiatives which are based on active citizen engagement and participation where NGOs encourage civil participation by the actions mentioned are: “The White Gloves” (Lithuanian “Baltosios pirštinės”) and “Let’s do it World” (Lithuanian “Darom”). “The White Gloves” is a politically-independent watchdog organization that bases its activities on a national network of volunteers, who monitor national elections in Lithuania and report all unlawful practices to law enforcement agencies. “The White Gloves” employ a number of tools and initiatives to support Lithuania’s civic society and to fight political corruption nationally, including independent electoral monitoring, voicing expert opinions on corruption and electoral violations, and publishing cases of unlawful practices. Since 2012, “White Gloves” has involved more than 2000 young people throughout the country in the process of independent observation and comment on public life. By taking the role of a watchdog, “White gloves” empowers young people to become active citizens by involving them in volunteering activities, e.g. flash mobs, pickets, campaigning in social media, and especially – the impartial observation of the election process. The civic movement “White Gloves” is an excellent example of civic empowerment significantly contributing to the development of a public dialogue in Lithuania (The White Gloves, 2016). “Let’s do it World” is an international environmental organization, which unites over 190 countries. This organization is based on voluntary participation and highlights the environment, citizenship and volunteering. This organization is like a platform that provides an opportunity to develop existing skills



and to acquire new ones. Each volunteer can realize their potential in such spheres as communication, management and administration, project development and management, international relations, and human resources. Recent initiatives in Lithuania include: “We stand for a clean sea!” (Lithuanian “Mes už švarią jūrą!”), “Preserve Neringa” (Lithuanian “Išsaugokime Neringą”), “National Let’s do it World forum” (Lithuanian “Nacionalinis DAROM forumas”) (Mes Darom, 2016).

The NGO actions mentioned here that encourage civil participation in the projects and initiatives of various organizations connect with all perspectives of e-participation and one of the *social quality*<sup>4</sup> features of NPG – social connection, which refers to informal, personal, and social relations. The mediation carried out by NGOs is connected with the citizen empowerment aspect of e-participation, emphasizing the emergence of an issue.

The representation implemented by NGOs among concerned groups includes following issues: provision of public services, formation of public policy, unification of NGOs, insurance, improvement in the transparency of governmental activities, encouragement of civil participation, and improvement of NGO engagement in decision-making processes. While many authors (Macintosh, 2004; Macintosh, et al., 2005; Lee, et al., 2011; Albrecht, et al., 2008; OECD, 2001; OECD, 2003) consider the aspects of *informing*, *consulting*, and *empowerment* as separate, they are still connected in the implementation of NGO representation. The representation on particular issues which NGOs provide in the process of solving them, is based on the creation and maintenance of cooperation between those represented. This type of cooperation is emphasized in one of the features of the *social quality* of NPG – social inclusion – which refers to belonging to various formal groups or institutions. Citizen empowerment, accented by NPG, is supplemented by these issues of representation: insurance, im-

4 Social quality is the principle of sociability progress according to New Public Governance. Sociability areas demanding attention: education, health and social security, culture.

provement in the transparency of governmental activities and the encouragement of civil participation. For example, the website “Transparency Line” (Lithuanian “Skaidrumo linija”), was created for reporting about possible offenses involving corruption or the bureaucracy, and advice on what to ask and how to behave when faced with such violations. The website allows citizens to: inform about a case of corruption or the bureaucracy faced by the website visitor, to ask website administrators or all website visitors how to behave when faced with such violations, and to give advice to other website visitors who have asked such questions (Skaidrumo linija, 2011).

The public affair decision-making that is carried out by NGOs refers to the representation of interests between the particular concerned individuals when common activities help to achieve the chosen objectives for all the concerned individuals. The definition of public affair decision-making includes the aims of mediation. One of the main public affairs that is solved by NGOs is the encouragement of citizens to become involved in the decision-making process.<sup>5</sup> The activities of mediation, representation and public affair decision-making include the same aim of NGOs, which is to “strengthen, encourage civil participation in various projects and the decision-making processes“. Even though citizen empowerment is one of the aspects of e-participation, in the context of public affair decision-making, this aspect refers to the activity carried out by NGOs. These NGO activities that are appointed for the empowerment of citizens are:

- the provision of new discussion and consideration topics by the citizens, and suggestions for ways to solve issues or activity ideas submitted by the citizens. This activity can be implemented
- 5 Other public affairs decision-making by NGOs: development of relations with government; development of relations with society; representation of interests with authorities, development of common activities and dialogue between among different sectors, development of dialogue and collaboration among NGOs in order to influence government interests, development of public awareness.

mented by NGOs or citizens through online petitions, for example, the websites “e-peticija.lt” and “peticijos.com” (Lithuanian “e-petition” and “petitions”). These websites have been created for the creation of petitions, web hosting and signing. These websites provide an opportunity to create your own petition and to see how many people signed or commented on it, and to also contact the author of a particular petition.

- Initiation of ideas and consideration of issues by the citizens. This activity can be implemented by NGOs through social websites which include online discussion forums, virtual communities, and chat sites, for example, the social network “Lithuania 2.0” (Lithuanian “Lietuva 2.0”) where active citizens can work together to make their country a better place. This portal, based on the citizens’ legislative initiatives, Referendums, and electronic signature laws, offers a legitimate, free way to raise civil initiatives and support them through e-signature. This network includes such e-communication tools as live chats, blogs, issues, and suggested ideas. All suggestions, comments, arguments and votes are published (Lietuva 2.0, 2016).
- the mediation of NGOs on the provision of citizen proposals and critical notes for institutions with the power of decision-making. This activity can be implemented by NGOs through various e-campaigns. For example, such web based projects as “Write to Them” (Lithuanian “Parašyk Jiems”), “Without Shadow” (Lithuanian “Be šešėlio”), and “My voice” (Lithuanian “Mano balsas). The project “Write to Them” highlights an easy way to find your own representatives in governmental institutions and to contact them. This website (*parasykjiems.lt*) helps to find out who “your” elder, mayor or member of the parliament is. This website provides an opportunity to e-mail these persons and to share problems, suggestions or to ask a question. Written letters are published in this website, so it is an opportunity to see what the issues are and those created by other visitors (Parašyk Jiems, 2016). The website “Without Shadow” (*beseselio.lt*) provides an opportunity to see places and cities on a Lithuanian map where alcoholic beverages, tobacco

products and fuel are illegally sold. In this website, citizens can quickly and easily inform, via internet, about places of illegal sales and mark them on the map provided by specifying the place and trade type (alcohol, tobacco or fuel). This information is sent to a police department, which is a partner of this initiative, and this police department analyses the information provided according to legal procedures. Each visitor to the map can see marked places of illegal sales, which of them are already closed, and to evaluate which regions of Lithuania are mostly “covered by shadow”. This website is an opportunity to see how much money Lithuania loses because of its shadow economy (Be šešėlio, 2016). The website “My Voice” (*manobalsas.lt*) is a rational voting system in the internet. In this website, residents of Lithuania are invited to take a short test and to find out which politicians or political parties have the same ideas as the visitor (in the fields of market and state, society, culture, history, foreign policy). This test should help citizens make a rational decision in order to decide which politician can represent their interests in the best way (Mano balsas, 2016).

In referring to the statement that the aspect of citizen empowerment in the concept of e-participation is separate and citizens initiate particular activities by themselves, the citizen empowerment carried out by NGOs is connected with several interested groups, for example, NGOs and citizens. Therefore, the activities carried out by NGOs that are meant for citizen empowerment are partly identical to the empowerment aspect of e-participation and one of the social quality features of NPG – empowerment, which refers to the ability of separate individuals to participate in decision-making themselves.

## Conclusions

The conception and features of e-participation were introduced in practical and scientific terminology on purpose to ensure communication and cooperation between different types of organizations

(governmental, non-governmental, business, citizen groups, etc.). Such e-participation was based on the aim to strengthen citizens' and society's engagement and participation in decision-making processes and other activities carried out by decision-making bodies. New Public Governance includes the same participants as those mentioned in the concept of e-participation and highlights the aspect of citizen empowerment, which is accompanied by its main tasks, which include the establishment of new forms of sociality, sustainability of civil society, and the development of organizational structures. NGOs as a part of New Public Governance actualize these tasks by invoking e-participation and particular activities. *Social* and *civic engagement* elaborate the content of these tasks of New Public Governance, and the particular activities carried out by NGOs using e-participation allows the formulation of how these tasks can be accomplished.

As all the tasks mentioned include a wide range of meanings, they are related to the social quality features of New Public Governance. These social quality features, involving aspects of citizen engagement, are carried out by invoking e-participation as well.

The significance of e-participation in new Public Governance has multiple meaning. Primarily, the aspects and features of e-participation to inform, consult, and empower include the e-communication methods, which are used by NGOs to implement mediation, representation, and public affairs decision-making. Secondly, the aspects and features of e-participation also mean NGO activities in the context of the social quality features of New Public Governance. Furthermore, the effects of e-participation can be interpreted as the intended purposes of NGOs. Consequently, the implemented mediation, representation, and decision-making in public affairs that NGOs invoke with e-participation specify the continuity of New Public Governance.

The meaning and expression of information, consultation, and citizen empowerment on the part of decision-makers is defined in the theoretical and technological conception of e-participation. The implementation of mediation, representation, and decision-making involved in public affairs by NGOs provides new mean-

ing for the features and aspects of e-participation. The field of information is not one-sided, because by the dissemination of information, NGOs seek to get feedback – citizen engagement and participation. Information is not only the announcement of a message or particular information, but also a challenge for attention or reaction. NGOs interrelate the encouragement and promotion of citizens to participate with their dissemination of information and invitation to participate.

The consultation aspect of e-participation is based on mutual connection – it not only requires the distribution of information, but also includes discussion, dialogues, conversation, and debate. In the context of various NGO projects and initiatives, the effects of consultation are related to the mediation carried out by NGOs. This means that the main goals of NGO's (mediation, representation, and decision-making in public affairs) are related with e-participation. For example, the promotion of citizen participation implemented by NGOs is assigned to the aspects and effects of the propagation of information (invitation to participate), and also includes the activity of citizen consultation by NGOs.

As stated, citizen empowerment is based on citizen initiatives without help of other organizations, but in the context of New Public Government, citizen empowerment is carried out by the NGOs. In this case, citizen empowerment means practical, actual feedback and actions from those who are provided with information and participate in consultation based activities. E-communication methods are intended to provide and receive information at the same time, and to implement activities for consultation and achieve the particular goals and activities of NGOs.

The format of the activities that are implemented and carried out by NGOs by using e-participation can complement New Public Governance by specifying how can the main tasks of New Public Governance in the establishment of new forms of sociality, sustainability of civil society, and the development of organizational structures are achieved. The mediation, representation and decision-making in public affairs implemented by NGOs in the field of New Public Governance are actualized by information,

consultation, and citizen empowerment. These aspects of e-participation also include activities for the achievement of the main goals of New Public Governance mentioned that NGOs carry out.

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# CITIZENS AS CUSTOMERS: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN INCREASING THEIR SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SERVICES

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In a globalised era, not only business is faced with huge changes and challenges. Rapid technological developments, decline in the significance of national borders, growth in the impact of various international organizations, reduction in the value of traditional social institutions and many other political, social and economic factors are changing the traditional principles of public administration. This encourages public sector organisations to change and improve their areas and principles of activity and to search for new management best practices, in order to achieve operational efficiency and productivity.

Transformations affected by these contemporary times and issues require new approaches to state management and the development of new methods of interaction between participants in the public sector. This applies both to the development of technology, and promotion of the engagement of citizens to find solutions for public problems and to increase the satisfaction of citizens as customers of public services. The latter statement sounds quite paradoxical, because usually, satisfaction with services has been traditionally associated with the business relationship. The need to reform the public sector is not only highlighted by active discussion in public places, and the call of academics and politicians to change the current situation, but also by the growing dissatisfaction of citizens with the quality of the public services they receive. It should be noted that citizens have started to treat public services specifically as customers, emphasizing their sig-

nificant role as taxpayers and demanding the increased accountability of the public sector before the state citizens. It is therefore very important to investigate and determine how the approach to the public sector is changing in modern society, which is exposed to huge transformations, and what expectations are being formed in respect to the public sector. In this time of transformations, communication plays the essential role.

This article aims to look at the productivity-problems of the public sector from the viewpoint of citizens as customers, and to analyse the role of communication, in order to increase the satisfaction of the customers of the state as consumers of public services. In the publications of responsible state authorities, the problem of communication quality is indicated as one of the essential obstacles in increasing the consumer satisfaction with public services.<sup>6</sup> Not only the issue of technological development, but also the implementation of new ideas, speed of solving problems and the lack of response to citizens' complaints are significant in this context. The funding for the public sector is growing, but the number of citizens unsatisfied with public services is also increasing. Many questions still remain unanswered. The adoption and implementation of solutions in the public sector is based on standardised methods and procedures, however, today it is obvious that the speed and continuous change in contemporary global life requires new forms of work and operation. Contemporary citizens are becoming increasingly more active and demanding, while problems faced by the state and its citizens are becoming more diverse and more complex. It is clear that in the current situation, the role of citizens and their ambition to participate more actively in the public sector management processes is growing. It is therefore necessary to move from procedural democracy towards participatory democracy, when the citizens themselves offer solutions to problems and seek their implementation. But in addition to that, we have to admit that the forms

6 Methodology for calculation of the satisfaction index of consumers with public services. Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, 2010.

of cooperation of the public sector participants and promotion of the engagement of citizens as consumers must be thoroughly considered and planned because they require a clear understanding as to how these cooperation and collaboration processes will be implemented. Recently, many issues and challenges in public administration are under deep discussion among professionals in this area. Problems of communication management in the public sector are needed to be solved as well. These issues have been analysed by M. Bogdał (2013), M. Pasquier and J.-P. Villeneuve (2012), B.F. Liu and J.S. Horsley (2007), D. Gelders et al. (2007), S.K. Pandey and J.L. Garnett (2006), etc. But suitable models have not commonly been constructed or the management tools have not been defined.

This article seeks to identify the role of communication in the process of interaction between the public sector participants, in order to increase the satisfaction of citizens as customers of public services. The main objections were raised for the achievement of the goal of research:

- to identify the participants of the public sector, and their roles in the 21th century
- to establish the causes promoting the formation of the approach to citizens as clients and consumers
- to define new procedures and practices for the promotion of the engagement of citizens (consumers) in finding solutions for problems in the public sector, and areas for developing closer relations with them
- to determine the priorities for supporting communication activities in the public sector for increasing satisfaction of the citizens as customers.

In order to examine reasons for the transformation of the public sector, and new forms for changing the interaction between the public sector participants, the methods of scientific literature and state documents were applied in this article.

## The public sector and its participants in the 21th century

The public sector is a very important guarantor of welfare in any society and its functions are related with the implementation of the many public, political, economic and social goals of each authority. Debate on more efficient management in this field are common among politicians, academics, public sector service providers and their recipients in many countries. Before starting to consider the public sector communication problems, it is necessary to clearly define the essential terminology in this sector, and even more so because the abundance of various concepts causes uncertainty.

In Ancient Rome, *publicus* meant meetings of citizens or subordinates, while the noun form of this word meant the state land, property or income. The Romans also used the word *publicus* in order to distinguish between public spaces (streets, squares, theatres) and private holdings (Charlton, Short, 1879). Still today, in the context of European policy, the public sector is understood as the opposite of the private sector. The public domain has been and is associated with issues important for the whole of society, and their solution. According to M. Pasquier and J.-P. Villeneuve (2012), public service organizations, defined independently of political institutions, came into being with the development of the liberal state. Based on J. E. Lane (2001), the public sector includes institutions maintained from the state and municipal budgets, and activities which are public, and the public can obtain information about it. The public sector includes a wide range of institutions through which the decisions of authorities are implemented in respect of various kinds of interests. According to the laws of the Republic of Lithuania, the public sector consists of the: 1) state, 2) municipalities, 3) budgetary institutions, 4) *state* and *municipal health care institutions* as well as *public*, 5) high education institutions and research institutes funded by the state and municipal budgetary institutions, having the legal form of a public body, 6) general education schools and professional training schools funded by the state and municipal budgetary institutions, having the legal form of a public body, 7) social care and (or) social servic-

es funded by the state and municipal budgetary institutions, having the legal form of a public body and state social security funds, 8) the public health care institutions, educational institutions and research institutes, secondary schools, vocational training institutions, social care and (or) social services, having the legal form of a public body, controlled by the entities, above-mentioned in the paragraphs 4–7, 9) programs and projects under the control of public sector entities and financed from the state budget, including the European Union’s financial support, international financial support and other resources, 10) The *National Radio and Television of Lithuania*, 11) funds of other resources, 12) tax funds (Law on Public Sector Accountability of the Republic of Lithuania, No. X-1212). The public infrastructure includes areas such as public safety, education, roads, health care, nurseries, national parks, energy and many other vitally necessary for the country’s citizens. The sector provides public goods and services for which there is no competition and are available to every individual. Public service is defined in the Law on Public Administration of the Republic of Lithuania, and it means the activities of legal persons controlled by the state or municipalities when providing social services for persons, as well as services in the spheres of education, science, culture, sports and other services provided for by laws. As stated by M. Bogdał, the public sector is the part of the economy that serves the public and can consist of governmental entities at different levels (Bogdał, 2013). The current Lithuanian Government also seeks to implement substantial changes in the fields of public management, fighting corruption, fostering innovative economic development, energy, educational system, health protection and social exclusion, as provided for in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Lithuania seeks to develop the knowledge society, to build a knowledge-based economy and move forward along the path of coordinated development to create and develop a modern, dynamic, and competitive economy (Šutavičienė, 2011). However, I. Lienert points out that it becomes increasingly difficult to draw a clear line between the public and private sectors, as both sectors have significantly converged. Increasingly,

states aim to attract and develop the partnership of public and private sectors (PPP), and when receiving state grants, private companies take care of their use and organize public services for citizens (Lienert, 2009). “Partnership of public and private sectors – methods of cooperation established in the laws of the state or municipal authorities and the private entity in which the state or the municipal authority delegates the activities assigned to its functions to the private entity, while the private entity invests in this activity and the property required for it, receiving the statutory remuneration for it”.<sup>7</sup> Such operational models have already been applied in the fields of health, education, social protection, and environmental issues for quite a while. Therefore, according to I. Lienert, it is appropriate to define the public sector by its implemented functions. One of the major functions performed by institutions in this field is ensuring the proper functioning of public infrastructure, without which the further development of the country is not possible. Modern public sector institutions can be of four levels: multinational (multi-country formations or their partnerships), national, regional or local (Dube, Danescu, 2011). The measurement of the operational productivity of all public sector entities is primarily associated with the efficient allocation and use of available resources. The public-private partnership creates opportunities to more efficiently use available funds, but in addition to that, modern society is increasingly active in discussing new requirements for the public sector – ensuring sustainable development, the need to take into account the individual needs of citizens, new forms of activity, etc. Public service providers must achieve a balance between financial and institutional capacity, and on the other hand, they have to meet the citizens’ expectations for services (Raipa, Petukienė, 2009).

In terms of the public sector participants, they most often imply the staff, i.e. personnel paid from public funds such as educators,

7 Law of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 16 June 2009 No. XI-299 “Law on amendment of Articles 2, 4 of the Law on Investment and supplement of this law with the fourth section1”. Official Gazette. 2009, No. 77-3164.



medical staff, statutory civil servants, social and cultural workers, civil servants, state politicians and state officials, judges, municipal civil servants, etc. However, everyone who may be interested in the decision process, decision outcomes, or who is directly or indirectly affected by the implementation of the decisions adopted, can be public sector participants. It can be said that the public sector is a multi-layer formation, which is significant for the citizens of every state, and is closely linked to the assurance of the quality of life of each of them. However, relations between service providers and their beneficiaries, criteria determining their satisfaction, and satisfaction enhancement schemes are quite clearly defined in the private sector. Meanwhile, the problem of dissatisfaction with the service quality by state citizens is quite obvious in the public sector. Changing society gives rise to new needs of its citizen, new expectations and interaction patterns. In addition to the efficient use of the funds, there is a need to formulate new standards of performance, which allow increasing the number of citizens satisfied with the services offered.

### **Formation of the approach to citizens as customers**

In looking for methods for increasing the operational efficiency of the public sector, emphasis is placed on the need for changing the attitude to the consumers of public services. Citizens of an increasingly active society have ample opportunities to express a more active demand for quality of service, to express dissatisfaction, to show solidarity with other citizens and demand their greater involvement in the decision-making processes, based upon their capacity as taxpayers. The paradigm of citizens as consumers and clients is emerging in the public discourse, when the service recipient finds himself a focus of attention, and the desired result should be his satisfaction with the quality of services received.

The society of the twenty-first century requires a new approach to the state's citizens and expects the state to play a greater role in ensuring their everyday life and well-being. In a globalised era, the citizens themselves have the right to decide which country to

choose as their residence or to which state to pay taxes. The opportunities for the free movement of citizens of various countries, learning about the social systems of better developed countries, comparing them and discussing it in the public space create new tension points in society, when citizens increase the pressure on the public sector representatives to change the traditional methods of operation and be able to meet the needs of the changing society. The weakening national self-consciousness of citizens, breaking links with their own national state, rising migration flows, declining population and the number of taxpayers have started posing a threat to the future of many of the Eastern and Central European countries. Disappointed with inefficient state governance and the low quality of public sector services, citizens clearly express their dissatisfaction in the public space, encourage the younger generation to link their future to other than the native country, renounce citizenship and demonstrate their loyalty to a state which is better able to take care of people's welfare. It is extremely difficult for the young state of Lithuania to compete with prosperous Western European countries. As L. Šimanskienė stated, Lithuanian civil society is weak, dominated by the state, rather than in collaboration with the public. It emphasises the exaggerated expectations: it has hoped to create newly developed institutions in a short period of time concerned with democracy and the market, while the short-term painful transition would be offset by order, security, prosperity and justice (Šimanskienė, 2002, 7). Globalization and technological developments promote the development of a competitive environment. Productive management of people, capital and resources determine the level of a country's development.

Such a situation indicates changes in the relationship of citizens with the state, while the above-mentioned trends generate the new approach to state citizens and their role in public governance. On the other hand, the categories of thinking and operational logic of the consumer society penetrate into all of the areas of modern life. The approach to citizens as customers began to emerge in the context of the consumer society, when many

of the public events started to be treated from the standpoint of economic theory. The orientation to the consumer indicates that the consumer needs that affect the emergence of the supply of goods or services which are most important lie in their delivery to the market. The question that then arises is what drives the change of attitudes and whether it is possible to create similar relations between service providers and their recipients as they exist in the private sector, in the context of the consumer society. Many official documents comply precisely with such an approach and emphasise that it is necessary to look into these relationships through the prism of the provider and the client. Advocates of this position emphasize that the public elects the government, therefore, it must serve them (Schachter, 1997). N. McDonald also notes that if the aim is more active involvement of citizens in the democratic processes, it is necessary to develop the attitude to citizens as customers and to provide innovative public services (McDonald, 2010, 2). Advocates of this position note that common problems of the modern public sector are hard to deal with because public service providers do not make use of their most valuable resources: their own customers. The effective use of customer skills, knowledge, time, etc. is inseparable from the general service design idea (Raipa, Petukienė, 2009). M. Quint, on the basis of research, notes that if business enterprises communicated with their customers in the way public authorities do, they would fail (Quint, 2012). N. McDonald notes that a citizen only wins in a situation where he/she is treated as a consumer, since it is associated with a choice, because there is an opportunity to choose the service provider, and different forms of presentation or interaction. Service providers now have an increased responsibility towards the consumer, who may be encouraged by various proposals and loyalty schemes, to lodge complaints when being dissatisfied with services, and seek a refund or justice in the court, etc. (McDonald, 2010, 5). Proponents of this approach are guided by a liberal definition of citizens and put more emphasis on the rights of each individual, rather than a mutual commitment between the community or citizens of the nation (Mauri, Muccio, 2012).

The orientation of the state citizen is a positive element; however, it remains unclear whether it is possible to identify citizenship and consumerism. Therefore, some theorists reject the approach to the citizen as a consumer, because, allegedly, these are two essentially different categories, whereas the public and the private sectors are fundamentally different in their mission in society, operating principles and objectives, therefore, it is quite complicated to talk about the development of a similar relationship between the service providers and recipients. J. Nalbandian highlights the differences between the citizen and the consumer, in support of a completely different nature of operation for businesses and the government. While there is an unlimited number of sellers and buyers in the market, in the meantime, the state has a monopoly and therefore, business has to constantly fight for customers, in order to survive. However, the main aspect highlighted by the author is that it is most important to personalize the consumer demand on the market, and the state must seek to satisfy the social needs of citizens. In this context, the public interest should be understood as a key value, which is more significant than private interests of individuals. Being a citizen means being an active person who not only takes care of the satisfaction of their own personal interests. Citizens are not focussed only on themselves; they assume responsibility for the communal welfare (Deresiewicz, 2011). In the opinion of N. McDonald, the main difference between business and the public sector is that business seeks to keep their existing customers and attract new ones, while the public sector, in contrast, seeks to reduce their number (McDonald, 2010, 4). But on the other hand, the public sector is not able to focus on the most profitable areas of activity, divide its customers into groups based on profitability and the regularity of service consumption, as this would undermine an essential condition for the functioning of the public sector – making public services accessible to all.

Therefore, in this context, the efficiency of public services is described specifically by the value of public services, and their benefit to the public. L. Horner et al. (2006) note that in the cul-

ture of individualism and consumerism, aligning the value of public services with ethical public services is a huge challenge. People want hospitals, museums and libraries to perform social objectives, but they also want them to satisfy their individual needs and provide more offers as to when and how these services will be provided to them. According to A. G. Mauri and S. Muccio, these two approaches should not be opposed, because citizens become consumers when they start using public services. In the public sector, it is very important that members of the public have confidence in their government as citizens and are satisfied with services they receive as consumers (Mauri, Muccio, 2012). In this respect, the focus on the consumer creates democratic opportunities for citizens to become more efficient political actors instead of merely being passive consumers of political programmes.

It is clear that the creation of public value is a complex process. Public sector organisations perform a particular mission in society and it is not possible to force them to only rely on the measure of their efficient use of resources. Their activities are limited by the need to follow a variety of official documents, and this hampers their flexibility to act quickly in a changing environment and to respond appropriately to the individual needs of citizens. In order to create a more efficiently operating system, it is necessary to consider the new role of citizens in public sector management and to seek closer cooperation between the public sector participants. Although it is not possible to unambiguously identify citizens and consumers, still, in terms of social value creation, the use of economic categories of consumption can help to optimize the activities of public sector organisations. From this stance, one of the most important operating perspectives is found in the knowledge and efficient management of citizen expectations.

### **Citizen expectation management**

In the debate about more efficient public sector management, it is very important to realize what the needs and expectations of citizens in the twenty-first century are, and how to manage them un-

der the conditions of a changing society. Knowing in what directions it is necessary to act, in order to ensure the realization of the citizens' needs, might allow more progress in helping to solve the growing problems of their dissatisfaction with the public sector.

We have to speak in general about the formation of a new relationship between the citizen, society and the state. T. Curristine, et al. note that all OECD countries are under pressure to improve the operational efficiency of the public sector and at the same time prevent the increase in spending. Societies are affected by factors such as aging populations, increasing costs of health care, rising cost of pensions, and restrictive budgets, and the citizens are demanding a clearer reporting of what the government has implemented with the taxpayers' money (Curristine et. al., 2007). A. G. Mauri and S. Muccio, on the basis of Dunleavy and Hood, emphasised that already in the 9th decade of the twentieth century, many countries have taken steps in the reform of the public sector. In particular, they reviewed budgets, in order to achieve greater transparency and accountability when costs started to be associated with the activity results and quantitative performance indicators, rather than process costs. In addition, opportunities were provided for a greater number of service providers to operate, and increasingly more attention has been paid to define operational standards and measure the effectiveness (Mauri, Muccio, 2012). Thus, one of the major public expectations is transparency of activities and accountability. Citizens believe that the outcomes of public sector institutions should reflect public priorities and their level of implementation. However, many researchers acknowledge that public expectations in respect of the public sector are growing, and discontent is rising, regardless of high performance indicators. Today we have to pay more attention to the research of public expectations and assessment of satisfaction of consumers with public services. Awareness of consumer needs and expectations and their satisfaction not only leads to more satisfied consumers, but also more efficient provision of public services. To this end, member states of the European Union, the European Union candidate countries and the European Commission focus

on the collection of best practices and development of recommendations on carrying out consumer surveys and measuring their satisfaction with public services (European Consumer Satisfaction Management Guide, 2010). The publication prepared by the European institute of public administration emphasises that that public authorities must respond better to society's needs and expectations, while the reformed public sector organisations should provide better, faster and broader services (European Consumer Satisfaction Management Guide, 2010, 9).

It should be noted that the expectations of citizens as consumers depend on a lot of factors. Summarizing the experiences of various countries in consumer satisfaction studies, the following factors, which determine consumer satisfaction are distinguished: delivery of service (was the result expected by the user achieved?), accessibility (is it convenient for the user to use the service?), service delivery speed (efficiency) (how quickly and on time the service was delivered to the consumer), professionalism (whether the specialists providing public services are sufficiently qualified?), feedback (whether the consumer is informed about the service progress?), understanding (is what kind of service the customer wants really understood?), friendly staff attitude (whether the professionals providing services are positive in relation to the consumer?), physical environment (whether service employees and their workplaces are tidy and appropriate for providing quality service?) (ECR group, 2008, 32). From the aforementioned factors it is evident that people's expectations are growing and are not only associated with the services received, but also with the environment, and the competence and readiness of the service providers. The service recipient is seeking to get detailed information about his/their choices to receive certain services, to be informed about the progress during the whole process and the achievement of the result. Just like in business, added value for the service recipient in the public sector is also created through their measurement of satisfaction while receiving the service and the lessons learned. In recent years, service provision in the public sphere has been newly interpreted: the service is no longer un-

derstood as a “one way” process, because an increasingly greater role in the development and implementation of solutions is being played by consumers and other members of society (Raipa, Petukienė, 2009).

However, in the context of today’s realities, it can be said that a society exposed to immense transformations needs far more radical changes. Quality, quantity and speed are not the only functions demanded by society from authorities (European Consumer Satisfaction Management Guide, 2010). A British non-profit organization – the Public Services Trust, which brings together all persons who are related to the public sector management (politicians, public service providers, civil servants, business and third sector leaders, citizen representatives) and attempts to bring them all together for the transformation of the public sector, has released a document specifying how public sector management should change by 2020. It notes that it is necessary to refocus and move from ensuring social security to the concept of social productivity. The public sector has the task of helping people be able to live a life they choose. This means that the sector representatives must be available 24/7, concentrated on the quality of their communication services and share the responsibility for the results achieved (2020 Public Services Trust, 2010). The basic attitude of the Commission that prepared this document is that it should be worthwhile to reject both the traditional static universal model of a service provider, and the consumerist new public governance model, because the modern public sector must be based on the principle of social citizenship. Citizens must have an obligation to society’s well-being in the same way as receiving its support – responsibility and reciprocity are fundamental characteristics of a sustainable society. Public services should be evaluated in terms of how much the state helps citizens, families and communities achieve the social results that they want. The increase in consumer satisfaction with public services depends on factors such as service presentation, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitudes (2020 Public Services Trust, 2010).

It is clear that public expectations in terms of public sector



bodies are changing. There is a increase in the need for virtual services, greater opportunities to choose between service providers and services, better information about available services and their provision, advisory services in addressing pressing problems, better service, and better coordinated work of institutions that would be oriented not on the formal performance of their functions, but on real assistance to public citizens. From the foregoing it follows that the greatest changes are associated with the implementation of advanced information technologies, which might help to more effectively regulate the awareness of interested persons and distribute them, based on encountered problems. However, in addition to the technology, there is an emphasis on citizen engagement in the decision processes, creation of a feedback mechanism, discussions with them, productive collaboration and constructive conflict resolution.

### **Mediatisation aspects of modern society**

When looking for new forms of communication and cooperation it is necessary to understand the fundamental causes of change in modern society, and its specifics. It must be admitted that modern society lives in a period of historic change, during the formation of an environment with levels and forms of communication functioning simultaneously. Modern society is a media society. Physical space and media space existing in parallel converge into a single reality, combining mass and interpersonal communication types, changing the culture and creating a new, more complex and more functional society (Peicheva, 2011, 10).

S. Bengtsson argues that if the use of media had been researched earlier as activities related to the home, nowadays in the postmodern era, this activity is linked to two completely different activities and spaces of an individual, in which the individual finds himself. Mediatisation in modern society results in social changes and the changing role of the media and mediated communication in the processes of ongoing transformations, which cover nearly all areas of economic, social and cultural life (Krotz,

2011; Hjarvard, 2008; Schulz, 2004). The term of mediatisation applies to the analysis of modern processes, phenomena and areas that are changing under the influence of the media (Couldry, 2008, 376). The types of media that have formally functioned as independent institutes, operating according to their inherent logic, are becoming an integrated part of all social institutions today, even in areas such as politics, work, family and religion, and the activities of all these social institutions are being reformatted on the basis of the institutional and technological *modus operandi* of the media, including methods in which the media distributes the material and symbolic resources in society (Hjarvard, 2008, 114). Media in modern society can no longer be understood as an additional or separate element in society and culture. The media operates simultaneously on four different levels: as a technology, as a social institution, as an organizational machine and a content creation tool, and as a space for the recipient's experience (Krotz, 2007, 23). Mediatisation is a meta-process, same as individualisation, commercialisation and globalisation, in shaping modern society. These conceptual constructs sum up the developments, their causes, forms of expression, consequences and the way this world works (Krotz, 2007, 1). A. Hepp perceives mediatisation as the logic of media operation, applicable to all social institutions and social processes (Hepp, 2011). K. Lundby also takes this approach, arguing that all processes in society are developed under the logic of media which includes commercial logic (commercialization processes), technological (aspects concerned with the application of technology) and cultural (all industries oriented to the cultural industry) logic (Lundby, 2009, 8). W. Schulz has outlined how the media alters human communication and interaction. *First*, they extend the communication possibilities over time and space, *second*, the media changes the activities of a social nature that were previously direct, for example, online banking has replaced the need for a physical meeting between banks and their clients, *third*, the media promotes the fusion of activities; direct communication merges with mediated communication and this has become part of our daily routine activities, *and finally*, actors

in different areas must change their attitude in order to adapt to media formats and procedures (Schulz, 2004).

It should be noted that in the modern world highly saturated with media, all spheres and their interaction become mediated. In a media-oriented society, communication is the basis of all actions, therefore, individuals increasingly include more media technologies in their daily activities. The growing number of media institutions and outlets decentralises and individualises the communication processes, and prolongs contact with the media as well at the same time, and with the same number of them as there was during the mass communication era. The internet as a sphere connecting everything enables the individual to combine the use of various types of media – organisation websites, news portals, web TV, social media, niche media, and the convenience of navigation throughout the pluralistic media environment limits the possibility of clearly identifying the use of a specific media, and defining its audience. At the same time, the media user may provide relevant questions to public authorities, browse online media portals, listen to the radio, watch television, read online media, shop, and have professional or personal relations via email or through social networks. The processes of media digitalisation and convergence generate new practices of media use and media user activity patterns. The established personalized use of media has seemingly and irrevocably changed the use of media in habits and motives. Modern media users live in an environment where many forms of media texts and presentations coexist and a computer-based environment at work and home during leisure time is becoming more common. Not one, but many audiences are being formed in alternative media spaces that are outside of the state and formal business structures (Esteva, Prakash, 1998, 11). One of the most prominent features of modern society is the prevalence of a participating culture where media users gain an increase in power in public online spaces, actively voicing their views, experiences, or observations, thus being able to influence and form the positions of other society members in respect to different organisations, products or services, problems or personali-

ties. The modern practice of media use is inseparable from social networks and niche media, which require individual action.

Moreover, in modern society, the consumption market and media industries, interrelated with a close complex relationship, form new media modifications. As noted by B. H. Bagdikian, it is because of this new system based on the public communication model breathes a link in the USA, that the global media audiences are introduced to a continuous flow of 24/7 news traffic, without which they can no longer exist (Bagdikian, 2004, 119). In today's stage of development, the media affects the growing consumption in all sectors of the economy, so audiences are primarily seen as consumers. Knowledge and information, which created a completely new social reality, have become accessible to the majority of the world's population. The media's audience now has an opportunity to track events in real time, to receive messages in a multidimensional structure (sounds, images, text messages) and even be part of these events. Interactivity and dialogue as main characteristics of the modern media determine that the boundaries between the media and the audience become less and less noticeable, various forms of communication are intertwined, and both individuals and different types of organisations act in the electronic space today (ranging from business entities and ending with the authorities). On the other hand, the internet has increased the comfort and independence of people and has allowed them to establish a connection with the rest of the world, while being in own personal space. Another important aspect of the new media is that the application of information and communication technology for each individual can be different: freedom of expression, area of communication or information exchange.

Changes in the media landscape have caused significant changes in the behaviour of the media users. The society of the twenty-first century increasingly often employs and more actively uses the opportunities offered by technologies in their daily routine. The ever-developing information and communication technology allows faster and more direct communication, spreading news, informing the public, delivering proposed services, discussing

their improvement, etc. The spread of the internet, prevalence of social media and rapid development of mobile communication technologies have created new spaces for civic discussion, public information opportunities and places to meet and interact, overcoming the distances of time and space. The term of participation becomes highly significant in order to identify whether the process is important for modern society: participation culture, participation economy, participation democracy. This term clearly describes the changing relationship between all actors of the public domain. Public sector institutions are seeking to adapt to the changing needs of society, to offer new content and to discover new forms of communication and cooperation with all the public space participants.

### **Changes in communication performance in the public sector**

The role of citizens as consumers in the modern public sphere is growing significantly. In addition, it is noted that the relationship of interaction regarding social subjects has become more complex and more dynamic because of the development of services and knowledge society, the increasing variety of social groups, and growing public requirements for state and local governments as well as membership in the European Union (Raišienė, 2016).

Therefore, one of the most pressing questions today is whether the role to be played by citizens in the management of the public sector is facing deep transformations. How should the interaction with users be developed so that it could lead to better organisation of the delivery of public services to citizens? This problem is diverse, and covers a number of important questions. First of all, it should be noted that for a long time, the public had no opportunity to become more involved in public sector management processes. The new media not only offers such potential for modern citizens, but also expands the list of their activities. According to T. Rasmussen, personal media allows more people to produce texts and take part in communication, while the Internet

offers new forms of access to public authorities, new channels of coordination and influence for social movements, along with a multitude of more or less stable settings for chat and discussions. The most central accounts can be listed as follows:

1. Social Movement activity (web, blogs, email, wikis)
2. Discussion and chats among citizens (blogs, chatrooms, emailing lists)
3. Citizen access to MPs and public authorities (web, email, blogs)
4. Online 'participatory' journalism (web, email, sms, mms, blogs)
5. Connections and weak tie networks (network sites like Facebook, Myspace, etc.)
6. User-generated content in broadcasting (tv, radio, web, sms, blogs) (Rasmussen, 2007).

The popularity of the Internet and rapid globalization obviously has great impact on modern society. With the emergence of the Internet and new communication tools (smart phones, tablet computers), this digital revolution is transforming established power relations in society, which is changing so that the organizations' activity models and their relationships with their target groups also has to change. It can be said that not only has the concept of communication activities changed, but also the organization's relationship with its stakeholders, when communication process management is increasingly often perceived in the overall context of the organization's own management functions. Formation of a strategic approach to communication is not only emerging in the business environment, where, as noted by V. Gudonienė, the focus in marketing moves from product sales towards customer satisfaction, but in the field of public relations – from a favourable attitude towards a close relationship (Gudonienė, 2006). Thus, relationships with interest groups now can not be focused only on one-way communication and should be based on the dialogue, with the establishment of relationships and support. The rapid pace of globalization and the increasingly growing number of innovative communication measures encourages business organiza-

tions to continuously improve, because they all seek to remain competitive and maintain long-term relationships with consumers. Today, timely, high-quality and effective communication is still considered to be one of the success components for organizations, regardless of their size or nature of activities. Since all modern natural and legal persons transfer their activities into the electronic space, and develop it in a versatile media environment, it can be seen that the divide between the operating methods of private and public institutions has become less noticeable. Every day, employees of different types of organizations exchange unlimited amounts of information with external individuals, their groups or other organizations. For this reason, it is vital to carry out the organization's communications in a targeted, systematic and planned way. This raises the question of whether it is only for these reasons that the business experience can be transferred to the public sector, thus solving the accumulated problems in this area. Many researchers admit that in the private sectors, producers have to follow their customers' needs and desires. Because of public relations or marketing tools, they can influence tastes and increase the demand for their products, but in the public sector, the goal is to change the customers' behaviour for implementing policy (Bogdał, 2013).

Public relations as the management of organizational communication with its key contacts (public) are an important part of the activities of each modern public sector organization. However, it must be acknowledged that many organisations in the public sector mostly apply the one-way communication model, where they dominate the flow of general information to non-targeted groups without seeking a close relationship and dialogue with the different parts of society. In implementing a communications strategy, the public institutions mostly use any of the standard communications tools such as news releases, media briefings, news conferences, advertising, speeches, publications, telephone lines, brochures, special events, etc. It should be noted that efficiency of a policy is strongly dependent on cooperation between the entities involved in its implementation and those benefitting

from it. There can not be any cooperation without the exchange of information, but communication should fulfil more functions for organizations within the contemporary public sector. As a result, three main functions of communication can be identified: informing, advocating and persuading directed towards policies and reforms, and engaging citizens (The George Washington University's Elliott School for International Affairs Lindner Commons Room, 2009 In Bogdał, 2013).

Today the main focus in finding resources for changing and improving the current situation is placed on citizens, their engagement and participation in the development of the new sustainable society. While state resources are extremely limited, it is citizen mobilisation that should help create social value for citizens and communities. The concepts of participation and engagement are more or less used as synonyms, meaning the process where individuals or groups interact with each other in a chosen way, exchanging information, and influencing specific decision-making. Researchers analysing service marketing have long ago admitted the important role of client participation in the services provided and have analysed (both in private and public services) the influence of customer participation on the productivity and quality of services, as well as client opinions on quality, satisfaction and value (Raipa, Petukienė, 2009). The European Public Administration Improvement Recommendations state that the dynamic encouragement of citizens (consumers) to participate, in order to increase their awareness, expectations and commitment through active engagement should be the overall strategy, aimed towards achieving a reasonable level of quality and satisfaction with public services (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001). The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in its State Progress Strategy approved in 2012, "Lithuanian Progress Strategy: Lithuania 2030", outlined the forms and opportunities needed to take a look through the prism of different topics and issues relevant to society, in its joint debate on the future of the state. Alongside participation and engagement, another very important term is partnership, which much more clearly describes the



changing role of the citizen and the attitude towards them, when citizens become operational partners, creating social value for society as a whole. In a traditional society, public services have been usually organized in the following sequence: political leaders decide what services, under what conditions and to whom they have to be provided. Afterwards, civil servants and professionals organize and provide services, and the role of citizens mostly remains passive. However, in the new environment, the number of participants related institutionally or specifically with the production, delivery and assessment of public services has grown, and the role of citizens has become more active. This changing role of citizens receiving public service (consumers) affects the operational strategy and the entire management cycle when successfully operating organisations use consumer needs and expectations as a starting point, focusing their plans on the consumer needs and expectations, and satisfying other minimum requirements (European Consumer Satisfaction Management Guide, 2010). Cooperation in Western European countries becomes a key strategy in pursuit of the development of modern society and the state. Partnership programs initiated and supported by the public sector are increasingly often not only used to enhance political and economic links, but to also implement social and cultural changes, along with the essential features of cooperation such as the organisation of activities to include flexibility, participation, and the horizontal nature of interdependence relations. B. Holmes notes that the aspect of cooperation with citizens is included in a number of the agendas of democratic countries, but its development is very complex because it requires new abilities, sequence of actions, and in general, requires a new communication culture (Holmes, 2011). Obstacles for the promotion of a new culture of communication and collaboration within the public sector are the autonomy of public sector institutions, their unattractive image, the persistence of traditional formal behavioural models and bureaucratic relationships between public sector entities, their inability to engage in constructive discussion, and the social insularity of citizens and their indifference to situations and problems of other social

groups. B.F. Liu and J.S. Horsley identify such attributes that affect the public relations of this sector: politics, focus on serving the public, legal constraints, extreme media and public scrutiny, lack of managerial support for public relations practitioners, poor public perception of government communication, lagging professional development, and federalism (Liu, Horsley, 2007).

In search of new forms of interaction between the public sector participants, it is highly important to generate operational strategies based on the involvement of citizens, which are based on the measurement of the needs of citizens as consumers, and the development of continuing relations. This means that public authorities must evolve from a closed self-centred service provider to an open network organization in which the public can trust. This is achieved through transparent processes and accountability, a democratic dialogue facilitated by diverting attention from internal (resources and activities) to external (results and effects) factors and from the classic cycle (creation – solution – production – assessment) to the engagement of participants and citizens (as consumers) in each stage of the cycle. Citizens (consumers) become co-creators, co-decision makers, co-producers and general assessors (European Consumer Satisfaction Management Guide, 2010). Before the transition to the discussion of the forms of cooperation and promotion of the engagement of citizens, it is appropriate to discuss what benefits can be realized through the participation of citizens in public sector management. The following essential items describing the benefits of citizen participation are highlighted in the processes of planning solutions for public issues: information and ideas, public support in planning solutions, solutions for protracted conflicts and costly decisions, but most importantly – the development of a spirit of cooperation and confidence between the institutions and society. There are many forms of public involvement:

- **Publicity:** publicity techniques are designed to persuade and facilitate public support, relating to citizens as passive consumers.
- **Public education:** public education programs present relatively

complete and balanced information so that citizens may draw their own conclusions.

- Public input: public input techniques encourage and solicit opinions from citizens. They are most effective when combined with feedback mechanisms which inform the participants of the extent to which their input has influenced the ultimate decisions.
- Public interaction: public interaction techniques facilitate the exchange of information and ideas among citizens, planners, and decision-makers. When the techniques are effectively utilized, each participant has the opportunity to express his or her views, respond to the ideas of others, and work towards a consensus.
- Public partnership: public partnerships offer citizens a formalized role in shaping the ultimate decisions (Cogan, et al. 1986 p. In: Nalbandian).

It should be noted that the development of long-term relationships with consumers is not only becoming a very important topic in the modern business environment, but the positive experience of business organizations in this area could also be used to find forms of developing cooperation in the public sector. Business organisations recognize that consumer loyalty does not just appear by itself, but is a result of the development of close and long-term relationships between the organization and the consumers. It becomes important for organisations to build long-term strategies in support of relationships with customers that would enhance their loyalty and ensure long-term engagement, because today the consumer is perceived as the organization's greatest asset and guarantee of success in the market. In analysing strategies for the development of consumer loyalty, two features that are essential for communication can be identified – trust and commitment. These are values that set the basis for attention to long-term focus, avoiding the temptation of short-term contracts and providing security against the unexpected actions of partners. The relationship development strategy consists of certain stages, which lead

to the implementation of long-term goals. Still, the need for a completely new culture and mindset has to be acknowledged. The public sector must involve citizens, families, communities, business enterprises and the general public to act solidly as partners, with all seeking better operational results.

## Conclusions

The public sector is a broad field of activity covering areas such as education, health care, law enforcement, energy, environmental protection, national defence and security, social welfare and employment regulations, etc. Each of these areas is a complex system that requires experience and knowledge of how to manage and respond to the needs of society and how to find effective solutions to problems. Each of them performs its mission and functions within society, without which, its further development would be impossible.

For a long time, the prevailing attitude towards citizens as subordinates requiring control, has no longer corresponded to the needs of modern society. The realities of the modern era require a new approach and relationship with the state's citizens. The development of economic and management theories increasingly establishes the approach to the citizen as a customer, directly or indirectly paying for public services, thus having the right to express dissatisfaction with the quality of service or decisions, and demanding accountability for the work performed. Many researchers acknowledge that the perception of the citizen as a customer and a client is not ideal and does not correspond to the public interest, and in addition, causes new problems. In particular, available funds are very limited, while the range of the problems of modern society is very broad. With the growing diversity of life models among the public, and deteriorating traditional social institutions, the scope of the issues addressed is only expanding. Yet, there are a lot of cases of abuse in society where more active individuals are able to use much more public services than those groups experiencing the greatest need for support. The perfor-

mance measurement models used in the business environment are not suitable for the public sector, because they are only focused on economic value. If it is very important to be able to listen to consumer concerns and aspirations in the private sector, and develop customized solutions for their needs, the public interest must prevail in the public sector.

An efficient communication system is an important condition for the functioning of the public sector. Today it is obvious that the one-way communication-based public relations model established in the public sector is no longer sufficient, as it focuses on the dissemination of information about the organization's work in the media. The Internet and the new media generate new modes and types of communication and interaction between the participants in their communication activities. The processes of media digitisation and convergence generate new practices for the use of media and models of activity within society. Contemporary society members as media users perform their selections in a multimedia environment, which has a totally distinct nature and operational logic than that of the traditional media. Modern media is not only becoming a form of spending one's leisure time, or a means of work, but rather, an instrument for the organisation of everyday life. In a mediated society, a communicative act is the basis of all acts, thus, an individual can select an increasing number of media forms to perform his daily activities. The ways that media users communicate with each other have been changing dramatically over the last decade, and the same is true for how they gather and exchange information about services and how they obtain and use them. The rise of a plethora of new media has provided media users with extensive options for actively providing information about services and products. Today, public communication must not only perform the function of simply providing information. In addition, it is very important to educate the public, to persuade it of the necessity for reforms and the validity of decisions, and to engage members of the public in discussion and decision-making. There is a need to provide for and to promote a sense of community among citizens and for partner-

ships with the public sector participants, which would allow them to concentrate all their capabilities and experience in finding the most appropriate solutions. In addition, it is highly important to encourage the transformation of employees from functionaries to consultants. In the public relations sector, an organization should apply a new communication model that can help reach the mutual understanding of all the public sector participants. The establishment of a culture based on participation generates new forms of civic engagement and solidarity, with the formation of spontaneous communication communities, and increases the demand for publicity under the conditions of transnational democracy. Communication management problems in the public sector require further detailed theoretical and empirical studies to identify the actual problems within each area of the public sector, and to generate new communication models that help meet the interests of the public members, engaging them in more active interaction with all the public sector participants. After this study of theoretical literature, it is necessary to state that all aspects related to the formation and development of citizen communities and research on forms of citizen partnership should be included in the agenda of subsequent research as some of the most relevant issues. The biggest challenges for the public sector include the emerging need for enhanced partnership and the engagement all participants of the public sector in public governance.

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# A DIALOGUE IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN LATVIA

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In many cases, mistakes and failures of the Latvian public administration are explained as unsuccessful communication rather than poor political decisions by politicians and state officials, while entrepreneurs still blame the arrogant public administrators and the non-effective bureaucracy, which was identified as the second main barrier for business in Latvia after high taxes (Global Competitiveness Report, World Economic Forum, 2016). On the one hand, such explanations of public administration representatives stress the role of communication, but on the other hand, they indicate that politicians and officials have not allocated sufficient resources to inform different public groups, including such important ones as entrepreneurs. In addition, it shows that public relations specialists who might know how to interact with entrepreneurs have been kept very distant from the decision-making processes without sufficient influence. At the same time, politicians and other public administration representatives should have adapted a similar way of cooperating with entrepreneurs because the new public management, post new public management, new public governance or public value management, whichever approach is taken, is based on such components as strategic management, marketing, human resources management, total quality management, performance evaluation and principles like flexibility, transparency, accountability, goal orientation, client orientation, measurement of results, and primarily two-way communication and collaboration.

“There is only one formula for success, taken from the developed countries, where governments have to sit at the table with the biggest business organizations and generate ideas. As the turnover of members of the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry amounts to twice or three times the state budget, we want to take part in planning Latvian development and deal with the government,” said the president of the largest, in terms of the number of its members, nongovernmental organization of businessmen in Latvia, representing 1600 members – Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Aigars Rostovskis (Rostovskis, 2015). (The author shares the consideration of George H. Fredrickson that “public administration” is a larger, much more inclusive term than government or government administration is, because it includes the work of the government and all of those who work directly for governments of all types and all levels or contract with the government to provide public services, including NGOs or businesses (Frederikson, 2010, 144), but in this study, the CCI is excluded from public administration because its main aim is the representation and development of business). All ministers of Economics and Finance of Latvia have stressed the necessity of dialogue with business organizations in their public speeches or articles (Kariņš, 2004, Kampars, 2009, Pavļuts, 2011, Reizniece-Ozola, 2014, Ašeradens 2016). The word “dialogue” has already been compromised because it is used by many politicians who are not ready to listen to public opinion and are not going to take it into account, but only imitate participation and partnership (Zanders, 2015). However, now it seems entrepreneurs are satisfied at last. The study conducted among members of the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry shows that the assessment of government increased to 5.05 out of 10 points, while the assessment of political parties is crucially negative, and a member of the CCI’s board, Katrina Zarina, pointed out: “During the last months, a dialogue between the government and organisations representing the entrepreneurs has been initiated and an agreement has been reached on no significant changes in taxes in the next year’s budget” (Chamber.lv, 2016).

This study sought to answer whether or not the principles of dialogue are used in public communication between representatives of the public administration and entrepreneurs in Latvia.

## Reflection on the past of public administration and business

The Oxford Dictionary defines the term “dialogue”, a) as a “conversation between two or more people as well as a feature of a book, play, or film”; b) “a discussion between two or more people or groups, especially one directed towards exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). The word dialogue comes from the ancient Greek “dialogos”, which means conversation, directly through the world (letonika.lv). So in a broader sense, we are dealing with it at every turn. It is not an easy task for Latvians to understand the essence of dialogue and implement dialogue in life because 40% of the population above 50 (csb, 2016) had grown up in a closed society in which their silence helped them survive the long years of Soviet occupation from 1945 to 1990 when they received the bare minimum necessities for living for their passive support of the Soviet regime. The fact that the president of the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, Peter Kriger (Pēteris Krīgers) demonstratively left a discussion organized by the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia after calling the view expressed by Juris Gulbis, the chairperson of Management Board of “Lattelecom” in the daily newspaper “Diena”, that “the trade unions are relicts from socialism”, offensive (LDDK diskusija, 2013). This demonstrates how difficult it is to communicate via dialogue in Latvia nowadays. Krīgers represented more than 100,000 members of trade unions, while Gulbis is not only the chairperson of the biggest IT enterprise in Latvia, but also a member of the board of the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia. While Gulbis received support and condemnation (from the arrogant Kriger as an adequate reaction) on Twitter (@JanisWizzard777; @zaiga\_p, 27.03. 2013), Kriger maintained his stance on the issue that “a responsible business not only contributes to the country’s economic stability, but also

shows the company's willingness to improve its competitiveness and engage in a positive dialogue with employees, customers and business partners" (Kriger). The situation is sad but typical, and goes back to Soviet times, when any dialogue similar to business practice was considered strange or even dangerous. Soviet people lived in a command economy, while Western society in the 1980s generated the idea that business principles could be implemented in public administration to make public functions more efficient. During the last decades, Western countries went through tremendous changes in public administration from a bureaucratic paradigm based on the Western perception of the world, where inputs are provided by politicians and services are monitored through bureaucratic oversight (Weber, 2012), to the new public management system where inputs and outputs are managed in a way that ensures economy and responsiveness to consumers (Osborne, Gaebler, 1992). At the same time, Latvia as one of the 15 republics of the USSR, stayed under the pressure of the communist party and its command economy. Formulating the new public management paradigm of that period in Western countries, Christopher Hood highlights seven key components: hands-on professional management, explicit standards and measures of performance, greater emphasis on output controls, disaggregation of units in the public sector, greater competition in the public sector, private sector styles of management practice, and greater discipline and parsimony in resource use (Hood, 1991; 4-5). All these are connected with communication, as we can define communication as a centrum of every culture without which culture dies (Fiske, 2011) and goes hand in hand with the idea of Edward T. Hall that culture is communication and communication is culture (Hall, 1959). The same can be said about communication and subcultures of the public administration or business. While communication is primarily an exchange of information in society, in the broader sense, communication is a transaction which demands understanding, seeking comprehension, and the building and maintaining of relationships where dialogue is necessary (Woodward, 2000).

Pioneers of new public management, David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, based their book “Reinventing Government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector” on the ideas of management consultants like Thomas Peters, Edward Deming, and Peter Drucker, and postulated that hierarchical, centralized bureaucracy did not function in the rapidly changing, information and knowledge intensive society of the 1990s. Osborne and Gaebler highlight 10 principles of new public management:

1. Steer rather than row to get a catalytic government.
  2. Empower rather than serve to get a community-owned government.
  3. Inject competition into the delivery of services to get a competitive government.
  4. Transform rule-driven organizations to get a mission-driven government.
  5. Fund outcomes, not inputs, to get a results-oriented government.
  6. Meet the needs of the customer, not the bureaucracy, to get a customer driven government.
  7. Earn rather than spend to get an enterprising government.
  8. Prevent rather than cure to get an anticipatory government.
  9. Move from a hierarchy to participation and teamwork to get a decentralised government.
  10. Leverage chance through the market to get a market oriented government.
- (Osborne, Gaebler, 1992).

Armed with the above ideas, the Latvian public administrators entered a challenging period of transitions after regaining independence in 1990. The public administration system had to be built from the beginning. At the same time, newborn entrepreneurs with just a little understanding of modern management and business ethics started a phase of wild accumulation of capital and privatization of state enterprises. Many members of former organisations and newborn state officials used the opportunity of being in the right place at the right time to become owners

of privatized state property. “Political pressure, lack of skills and knowledge, lack of accountability, trust on external control mechanisms instead of reliance on personal initiative, rigid hierarchy and legislation were common to public administration in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as other Eastern and Central European democracies” (Beblavy, 2002). Dr. Karklins, a Latvian born German who later settled in the USA assesses the situation of that time: “Party bureaucracy not only defined the law, but also enjoyed various privileges at the expense of the rest of the society. The rule of law was like a window dressing behind which unfavourable formal rules were often challenged by ‘telephone law’: the overriding of legal acts in favour of highly ranked officials’ personal wishes, usually by telephone. Such practices were tolerated and accepted ways of ‘doing businesses’” (Karklins, 2005). The illusion that something could be changed 10 years later was destroyed in an interview on Latvian public TV with billionaire Julijš Krūmiņš saying that he paid 10,000 euros to Jurmala’s local basketball team after receiving a message from the mayor of Jurmala city as well as some money to be used for repairing the leaking roof of a local school and 50,000 euros to furnish the concert hall (1:1, 2016). Even after being investigated for breaking the law regarding direct donations to political campaigns, he did not see anything bad in these donations, as he was supporting people he sympathized with.

## Granted rights to get services and express opinions

The new stage for both business and public administration came when Latvia joined the EU in 2004 and public administration representatives and businessmen had to cope with such principles of European Union governance as openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Decisions shall be made as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen (Treaty on European Union, Article 10, 3). Two-way communication was stressed by the European Commission in the

document “Plan D – for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate” with a strong focus on listening and dialogue. (Plan – D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, 2005). The Satversme (Constitution) of Latvia guarantees that everyone has the right to freedom of speech, which includes the right to freely acquire, hold and distribute information and to express his/her own opinions. Censorship is prohibited. Everyone has the right to unite into unions, political parties and other public organizations (Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, articles 100, 102). Written phrases differed from the reality. Scholar Inga Vilka, in exploring the principles of business in municipalities in 2004, discovered that the implementation of these principles was delayed because of the existing legacy, lack of capacity (finances, human resources, know-how, technologies), and unwillingness to change something. At the same time, many municipalities and state institutions developed one-stop agencies for public service and integrated marketing communication plans to communicate about their services in such a way, adapting the philosophy of business (Vilka, 2004).

In 2006, Australian Professor Owen E. Hughes defined four ideas: management (orientation on results and managerial responsibility) comes prior to administration (following instructions), economic principles (a summary of public choice theory, principal-agent theory, contracting, and competition) can assist in public management, modern management theory and practice (flexibility and organization) can improve public management and the delivery of services is important (Hughes, 2006). By that time, the development of IT and Globalisation had changed the paradigm of communication, making it open, personal, 24/7 and allowing immediate feedback, which concerned the public services online and face-to-face. An effective dialogue between the government and society was set as one of the cornerstones in the document of that time “Guidelines for the communication policy of the government 2008-2013” (Par valdības komunikācijas politikas pamatnostādņēm 2008–2013. gadam, 2008).

According to the main document for planning the development of the country, the Latvian National Development Plan (LNDP),



a limited amount of investment should not be the reason for a considerable deterioration of access to services by people living in different types of settlements – from villages in parishes to Riga (National Development Plan, 2012). In the beginning of 2016, 1,969,000 people lived in Latvia, 17,100 less than the year before because of negative birth and migration rates (csb, 2016). Emigration is such an important issue that migration from the countryside to the capital Riga and from Latvia abroad is considered by entrepreneurs to be one of the main problems alongside poverty, security and money (taxes, access to finances) (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2015). There is a contradiction of approaches because the Latvian National Development Plan aims to achieve an economic breakthrough, while members of the CCI call it “squeezing the lemon”, aiming to get more money from taxpayers and not focusing on non-payers (CCI, 2015) despite nice words about the strategic objective, “Outstanding Business Environment”, which includes a coherent regulatory framework, the operation of a stable state support and monitoring system, public services oriented towards the needs of businesses, and a clear and competitive environment for the start-up and development of business activities so that anyone willing to do so could establish a business, work and live in Latvia (National Development Plan, 2016, 26). Evaluating the impact of IT on communication between the public and public administration in Latvia, there are approximately 2000 services available on the Unified Portal of Services of State and municipalities and approximately one fifth of them are provided online, while 55-60% of them are supposed to be possible to provide, but despite the large use of the Internet in Latvia (66.2% of the inhabitants use it on a regular basis), the use of electrical service is relatively low (41.3%), which is higher than the average in EU(41%), but considerably lower than in Iceland and Denmark where this level is above 80% (Konceptija par publisko pakalpojumu sistēmas pilnveidi, 2015, 12). If we consider that the role of communication in public administration has changed from providing information to the society in the middle in 1990s through interaction with society in the begin-

ning of 2000 and the integrated approach to communication from 2008 to interactive communication in 2014 (Mirlina, 2015), this number should increase considerably. This interactivity was approved in the document “Public Administration Policy Development Guidelines for 2014-2020”, and stipulates “the legal awareness and involvement of society in decision-making processes and the provision of modern communication (Public Administration Policy Development Guidelines for 2014-2020). The representatives of the public administration are deep into twitter, flicker, youtube, facebook, and the local social net draugiem.lv. They use applications, first of all, the internationally awarded application Football, and a digital info centre (Pavlova, 2014). Nowadays, networking and shared values have become the new platforms on which communication is based. Considering that the paradigms of traditional and new public management do not fit comfortably with the new paradigms of networked governance and public value management, where the predominant goal is the achievement of public value that in turn involves greater effectiveness in tackling the problems that the public most cares about regarding the delivery of services to system maintenance, Gerry Stoker considers the latest a saver (Stoker, 2016). Implementation of the above-mentioned is not conceivable without two-way communication. In 2013, the Director of the State Chancellery, Elita Dreimane, had already declared that the state should form a new generation of employees for public administration whose values are professionalism, client orientation, responsibility, honesty, ethics and responsiveness to state property. Therefore, the State Chancellery in cooperation with the Latvian School of Public Administration is working on a new module study system to provide lectures on the responsibility of officials, ethics, client orientation, cooperation, the involvement of society, and other principles of good governance (Dreimane, 2013). This policy is being continued by the current Director of the State Chancellery, Mārtiņš Krieviņš, from whom the former Prime Minister of Latvia Laimdota Straujuma expected the development of a work culture, and first of all, cooperation with people (Ism, 2015).

The state must strengthen the quality of information and democratic discussion space to promote the participation of the public, listening to the public, explaining the decisions made and promoting common values with a sense of purpose (Latvian National Development Plan for 2014 to 2020, 2012). There are many consultative councils, including these for entrepreneurs, and people can raise their voices according to the Procedures for Public Participation in the Development Planning Process (likumi.lv, 2009).

## Compliance of the dialogue

Dialogue has become a buzz word today in Latvia along with the ideas of James Grunig and Tod Hunt concerning the two-way symmetrical model of public relations in which communication is used for discussions, conflict solving, establishing mutual understanding, and earning respect between an organization and its stakeholders (Grunig, Hunt, 1984, 22). The field involving the implementation of the four models of PR is wide and corresponds to communication as an umbrella of public relations as well as management, including new public management and value-based management. At this point it is necessary to stress public relations as a significant part of communication, because according to the definition of the Public Relations Society of America, “Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics” (PRSA, 2016) and a mutual relationship is what all ranks of public administrators and entrepreneurs declare to achieve.

In cooperation with David M. Dozier and Larissa A. Grunig, James Grunig developed a model of excellence in public relations, stressing that the value of public relations is determined by relations with the public and the result of these relationships is a reputation, therefore, an organization has to communicate with its target audience and coalitions to achieve a goal (Grunig, Dozier, Grunig, 2013). Rex F. Harlow’s idea that PR is a management function, taken up by James Grunig and continued by Carl H. Botan and Maureen Taylor, postulated that public relations

develops with a focus on a goal (Botan, Taylor, 2004). This still goes hand in hand with Harlow's definition of PR: A distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its public, involves the management of problems or issues, helps management stay informed on and responsive to public opinion, defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest, helps management keep abreast of an effectively utilized change, serves as an early warning system to help anticipate trends, and uses research and sound ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Harlow, 1976, 36). The focus on relationship in this long definition is evident. In 1996, Hugh Culbertson and Ni Chen wrote that PR's practice moves from one-way communication to two-way communication and from information and persuasion to a relationship (Culbertson, 1996, p. ix), hence, public relations on behalf of an organization provides an internal dialogue within the organization and an external dialogue between the organization and its target audience. In the two-way symmetrical model, it is equally easy for an organization to ensure the target audience's attitude and actions as it is for the audience to ensure that the organization changes its. This approach is known as the dialogical turn of public relations. Based on the ideas of Jürgen Habermas about ethical communication, the message should be understandable, the message must be based on facts and should be accepted as based on facts, the message carrier must possess integrity and adopted as faithful, the message must be acceptable and based on mutually recognized values (Habermas, 1981, 1990). Roland Burkart developed consensus-oriented public relations or COPR, which provides, firstly, that the quality of communication is assessed at three levels: information which is distributed by the organization, information distributed by the media, and the audience's knowledge of the subject. Secondly, if the target audience perceives the issue as being extremely important or controversial, consultation during meetings face to face and on social media is necessary. Thirdly, media platforms must be used. Fourthly,

the situation must be evaluated and developments monitored. (Burkart, 2003, 2007). The issue of achievements in public relations in the context of the dialogue is sensitive because practitioners of public relations have to achieve objectives like persuading someone or getting support, while dialogue as a method does not intend to change people's beliefs, but provides them with information and builds relationships. As a process, a dialogue is targeted at finding understanding and the formulation of understanding. (Deetz S. Simpson, J., 2013). "The dialogue doesn't solve problems, it dissolves them," considers William Isaac (Isaacs, 1999, 19), who differentiates a dialogue from a debate. The United Nations Development Program offers a comprehensive formulation from a former president of the International Sustainable Dialogue Institute, Harold H. Saunders: "Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take the others' concerns into her or his own picture, even when disagreements persist. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognises enough of the other's valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other" (Pruitt, Thomas, 2013, 40-41). Pruitt and Thomas state that inclusion and participation are necessary for a dialogue along with empathy, willingness to change, and long-term perspective (Pruitt, Thomas, 2013, 52). Both authors' approach is in line with Tom Murray's definition that dialogue is a form of egalitarian listening and inquiry. Murray also believes that the essence of dialogue is to prevent conflicts and empower people to feel good; not to achieve a lasting effect and achieve a goal at any price. Structural dialogue, according to him, includes three major parts: the exchange (characterized by consultation, creation of a relationship and understanding), search for understanding (characterized by reaching out to another person and free structure), and listening (characterized by slow motion and non-mandatory decision-making) (Murray, 2015, 12). Sarah Maddison, in writing about open communication, which is characterized by fair and true listening and opening up during the dialogue, emphasizes that disclosure

may hurt (Maddison, 2015). This means that communicators must be competent and considerate, endowed with understanding, that problems are not solved, but “dissolved” among the participants in the dialogue and brought into the wider community, and modern information technologies contribute to this dissolution and convergence.

The use of dialogue in communication involving the practice of public relations in Latvia is more often determined by the goals of campaigns and a lack of resources than by a lack of understanding. The scholar Inga Pure, in exploring public relations in Latvia, concluded that much can be achieved with one-way communication, because people live in an abundance of information and are too busy for dialogue. More often in Latvia, we can speak of asymmetric two-way communication, not two-way symmetrical communication (Pure, 2013, 141). However, the confidence and trust in the democratic way should be built through dialogue, and the Latvian National Development Plan 2014-2020 also mentions opportunities to participate in decision-making as well as improved communication with the public, and has built up people’s confidence in their country (Latvian National Development Plans, 2014, 8).

In order to determine the practice of dialogue in communication between public administrators and entrepreneurs, 6 expert interviews were organized with communication specialists (3 representing public administration and 3 representing entrepreneurs) who work on campaigns on a daily basis and have a competent opinion about PR models and dialogue principles. A content analysis of discussions to specify the use of dialogue in communication between entrepreneurs and public administrators was carried out as well. The high level discussion “Tax policy: are the interests of society and business respected?” organised by Inese Vaidere, a deputy of the European Parliament, on November 24, 2015 was chosen as the object of research. The communication of the Chamber of Trade and Industry with public administrators was chosen because the Chamber, besides the Employers’ Confederation of Latvian, is the main and most active business

representative organization.

The expert interviews were conducted in September 2016. Every expert was asked to name five principles of dialogue and actions characteristic for these principles in Latvia.

Equality	Openness	Comprehension	Meaningfulness	Sustainability
Participation on equal conditions	Participants are welcome to express their opinion	Participants are able to formulate messages	Participants improve their knowledge	The relationship has been continued after discussion
Arguments are based on facts and logic instead of authority	Participants are welcome to listen to the opinions of others	Participants are able to understand others	Participants provide their knowledge to others	The relationship has been continued even in the case of misunderstanding
All participants are respected	Reflection is neutral, rather positive	Participants confirm their interests and abilities without causing offense	Participants stimulate a new understanding	The relationship will be the basis for future projects

Table 1. Expert opinion on the principles of dialogue and actions characteristic to these principles in Latvia

The common opinion of experts is that the two-way asymmetric model is much more widely used in communication than the two-way symmetrical because the resources (finances, time, personnel, and technologies) and goals of PR campaigns or other elements of integrated marketing communication are restricted and that the clients from both sides, the public administration and business, are not interested in using such a complicated method as a dialogue. The main opinion is that public administration representatives are more familiar with theories of communication, while entrepreneurs are more active and reasonable in communication.

Principles like equality, openness, comprehension, meaningfulness and sustainability, in descending order, with their characteristic actions were chosen as most frequently expressed from the

12 different principles identified by the experts. During the next step, reverse principles were chosen like equality vs. superiority, openness vs. closeness, comprehension vs. incomprehension, meaningfulness vs. meaningless, sustainability vs. temporary, and four levels of assessment for every pair were established. The first part of the discussion “Tax policy: are the interests of society and business respected?” organised by Inese Vaidere, a deputy of the European Parliament, on November 24, 2015 was analysed for discovering the principles of dialogue or absence of them characterised by the reverse principles. From the entrepreneurs’ side, the most often used principle of dialogue was openness but a reverse principle – incomprehension was expressed, whereas from the side of the public administrators, it was openness and meaningless. The openness on both sides could be explained by the situation that the idea about the discussion came from the entrepreneurs, and the public administration, represented by politicians and highly ranked officials were open or represented the role of an open public administrator as mentioned in the theoretical approach of Erving Goffmann (Goffman, 1959). It was a privilege for the public administration representatives to show openness because one of politicians led the discussion. At the same time, the entrepreneurs were more enthusiastic and persuasive than their counterparts in their opinions and attitudes.

## Conclusions

The new public management, oriented on results that differ from the traditional public management based on a strong hierarchy and centralist perspective, provides more hope for equality in communication. Finding a solution in the fragmentation of structures of monopolistic public services and development of the motivation of public servants and tools to influence their performance, the Latvian government has built up lean, flat, autonomous organizations, like one-stop agencies, taking into account the public and private sectors and governed by a central leadership set by the politicians. Latvia is a country with a small and open economy



dominated in part by micro, small and medium enterprises. The development of business in every district is a precondition for the permanent progress of that territory, and that is why small entrepreneurs from the countryside should not be considered outsiders for public services or communication. The use of dialogue in communication is restrained by the lack of time and ability of the stakeholders to understand the principles of dialogue. Dialogue is a complicated model of communication, especially if the stakeholders are so different.

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# THE INTERACTION OF MEDIA AND PUBLIC POLICY PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCOURSE OF PROBLEM CONSTRUCTION

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## Introduction

The media, as one of the main creators and providers of public opinion, greatly influences the public policy process, especially political decision-making. The media influence on the public policy process is most frequently measured by the media's ability to determine a public policy agenda and, therefore, influence the discourse between public policy participants, decision formers and makers (Jones, Baumgartner, 2005; Dearing, Rogers, 1996). Most research on the interaction between the media and the public policy highlights a unidirectional influence on the public policy process and its participants. This influence is stressed through the change in knowledge (the cognitive aspect), opinions, emotions (the affective aspect), and actions (behavioural aspect). In order to reveal the negative influence of the media on the public policy process, it is beneficial to describe this influence. It can be done during the analysis of the media influence, when the socially constructed role of the media is constant and regular in the public policy. On the other hand, it is admittedly more frequent that, if there is a change in the public policy, the media does not necessarily remain the most influential agent of the public policy process, because the media can be affected as well.

The change in the interaction between the media and public policy participants, according to D. Dery, is especially visible through the problems that develop in the public policy during the

formation of agendas. Each actor participating in the construction of problems employs individual frames of problem determination. These frames present the perception of a problem, which causes irreversible changes in the interaction inside the public policy participants' network (Dery, 2000). As M. Rein and D. Schön point out, the changes in the interaction of the participants directly depend on the determination of frames. Participants that face the same problem may gather together to form coalitions and, formalizing a united perception of a problem in an agenda, influence other participants (Rein and Schön, 1977). The interaction between the media and the public policy participants depends on many aspects: definitions of a problem, the purpose of framing, and ultimately, the particularities of the interaction among the participants themselves, i.e. needs and goals, context, and other factors.

The aim of the article is to reveal the particularities of the interaction between the media and the public policy participants.

### **The Problem and Problem Construction: An Analysis of the Concept**

In the most general sense, it is a theoretical or practical task requiring scientific research (the international terms dictionary). An objective problem does not exist; it is an artificially constructed, dynamic concept. The problem is caused by different circumstances that influence the results of the participants' interaction (Hanberger, 2001). F. Baumgartner and B. Jones claim that an etymological explanation of a problem in the field of media and public policy can promote many discussions. These discussions are inspired by the fact that the concept of a problem may seem to be obvious.

According to D. Stone, a problem consists of episodes related by causal ties and causal stories conveyed to the public via interaction by the participants of the public policy and the media. In reality, these narratives reveal the complexity of an addressed issue, determine its causative agents, and encourage the participants to

assume responsibility for the actual and potential consequences (Stone, 1989). D. Dery, in complementing Stone, provides a process definition to a problem and indicates that a problem is an endless dialogue between the media and the public policy participants. A problem discloses and considers current issues in society, producing the need to achieve a consensus on the question, and to discover possible solutions (Dery, 1984). A. Hanberger details the treatment of a problem as a process and the identification of causes (what caused it), the anticipated results (what is to be affected by the problem) and the interest groups (who they are).

In other words, solving a problem entails revealing its causes and consequences during the interaction process between the participants (Hanberger b, 2001). Although the process component in the concept of a problem highlights its continuity, as A. Veselý notes, the argumentative nature of a problem during the interaction between the public policy participants may cause a conflict (Veselý, 2007). A problem could be developed and maintained (constructed) by the media and the public policy participants to the extent that it may cause an irreversible change in the interaction of the participants by accentuating and solving issues of public interest. J. Weiss (1989) stresses the influence, the role, and the importance of the participants in the discourse of the problem.

### **The Role of Framing in the Interaction Between the Media And Public Policy Participants**

According to R. Entman, framing means selecting and defining certain aspects of a problem by identifying the forces that caused it, providing a moral evaluation, and suggesting recommendations on further behaviour/actions (Entman, 2007). The aim of framing and frames facilitates the identification of the means and methods employed for the problem's solution (arguments for and against). At the same time, such a definition of frames cannot cover individual frames. Meanwhile, communication and public policy researchers who investigate the role of framing in the media and public policy processes are not only interested in the schemes of



frames, but also in the interaction of the participants. Scholars are interested in participants' unpredictable, controversial discourse, which influences the stability of the participants' roles and factors altering this stability (M. Rein and D. Schön 1977 (b), 1993: cit. Fischer and Forester; Fischer, 2003; Benford, 1997; Dewulf et.al., 2009; de Vreese, 2012 and others).

Based on K. Weick (1979), frames as a construct of a problem provide a more descriptive, static, and at the same time, similar classification of its features, without revealing the differences of the problem framing process. Nevertheless, as the analysis of problem definition demonstrates, a problem, as well as its frames, is treated differently by the media and public policy participants. Framing in the interaction between the media and public policy participants becomes a process resting upon three main interpretive steps: problem acknowledgement, problem identification, and problem development. All these levels are linked. The comprehension level helps facilitate the interaction to resolve the problem. The other two levels, problem identification and development, create certain features, shaping the undefined aspects of a problem. After finding possible solutions to the problem, this helps to eliminate instability and doubts. In this context, framing reveals a relation between the framers (participants) and the problem, and also explains the mechanism of the interaction between the media and public policy (Rein and Schön, 1977 (c), 1996). On the other hand, as R. Benford (1997 b) notes, this kind of framing only reveals the effect of the structuring function of information on a problem. However, it does not allow the coordination of actions between the participants in their interactions, and the participants may convey their individual versions of a problem.

This can mislead participants to construct separate and dissimilar frames of the problem and even distort it. Regardless, one of the main advantages of framing is the possibility to define competing frames, compare them, and after identifying the main points of a problem, analyse the structure of interaction between the participants, i.e., to analyse the interaction frames (Fischer b, 2003). The media and public policy participants, while

framing problems, constitute specific interpretive communities (or discourse networks). These communities are supported by a similar understanding of the problem. Frames provide a steady story line, support the creation of a discourse network and argumentatively ground the particular aspects of a problem. Usually, a few narrative frames constitute a story consistently supplemented by other narrative frames that are unified into a steady plot line (van Hulst, 2012; Czarniawska, 1998; Forester, 1999). When the corresponding approaches of the participants to a problem match, a reframing is performed. Then, a common (collective) problem frame is constructed, and a problem's determination is "prepared" for the media agenda. On the contrary, when dissimilar frames of a problem meet, a conflict arises in the participants' network. Due to this, the contrasting frames of the problem could be set in media agendas, and these unrelated frames of a problem would be presented to the public. The difference between the problem evaluations and non-recognition of the participants' identities (the participants' belonging to a network) develop into the main causes of a conflict (Forester, 2009; Sinha and Gasper, 2009; van Hulst, Yanow, 2014). Therefore, framing as a result of the interaction between the media and public policy participants performs a metacommunication role. On one hand, the discourse surrounding a problem is consistently formed from a problem plotline. On the other hand, it promotes conflicts and disagreements in the participants' network. It simultaneously solves problems as it rejects unsuitable ones that did not receive public approval. In other words, framing aids the media and public policy participants in comprehending, constructing, and conveying a problem, while adding their own interactions to its context.

Considering that the relations between the media and public policy participants during their interactions in the network, as well as their separate acts are grounded by extremes (either unconditional support of one another or complete disregard), certain manipulative actions of the participants stay unevaluated: the possibility of the network participants' to maintain a certain worldview or beliefs that do not correspond to the opinion of the

majority. In such a case, according to F. Fischer and J. Forester (1993), different manipulative actions may irreversibly change the interaction between participants. To reveal a possible change in the interaction between participants, the theory of political economy is introduced in the following chapter. This theory is grounded by the premise that media operation is supported not by the promotion of public interests, but by the promotion of business interests that may have either positive or negative impact on the discourse of the public policy participants and simultaneously change the role of the media as an interested party in a participants' network.

### **The Approach of the Theory of Political Economy as a Factor of a Change in the Interaction Between Network Participants**

From the point of view of communication, political economy is a theoretical and practical direction that analyses the entrenchment of market elements in the media and public policy processes. According to the principles of the theory of political economy, the operation of the media as an interest group is grounded by economic laws, the maintenance of business interests. Therefore, the content being created by the media (in this case, the problem presentation in a news agenda) in society and between the economic and political elite acquires an indisputable significance. It should be noted that the importance of the media becomes directly proportional to market variables, because the media, with its distributed content, reflects the needs of a market economy, not the needs of the audience. On the other hand, the audience adapts to the news content provided by the media, and its needs are equated with the media interests (Mosco, 2009). The researchers of the theory of political economy, in analysing the communication process and its change, distinguish two main directions of the theory of political economy. The first is the economic direction that relies more on an economic-market factor during the interpretation of the media operation. It states that the media influ-

ence and importance is determined by the behaviour of economic entities and economic exchange between the market participants, i.e., business structures and the media. The second is the political direction, grounded by the entrenchment of the power relationship between economic-political structures and the media (Mosco b, 2009; Golding, Murdock, 2000).

According to a statement made by J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woollacott (2005), business structures influence the media content, as well as its importance as an institute, by encouraging its promotion and the conveyance of a consistent ideology that maintains business interests by a distributed content. P. Friedrich (1989), during the presentation of political economy as a power source, stresses that the expression of an ideology between the media-public policy participants and business entities interested in the ideology structure is almost unnoticeable to the society, i.e., audience. Supporting this view, the author distinguishes three main ideology branches: 1) notional ideology; 2) ideology amending social-political order; 3) ideology hiding a dominating mechanism (Fig. 1). In other words, an ideology is an undefined, contractual structure incorporated into a problem construction discourse. The ideology may indirectly influence the comprehension and the conveyance of a problem, i.e., a problem frame, and directly influence power relations between the participants within a network (Hajer, 2005; Graham, Luke 2011).

To explain the ideology entrenchment in the media, and the media and public policy participants' network, it is worth remembering the framing feature to reject an inadequate problem determination (frame) or the unsuitable or unrecognised identities of participants. Although it has been stressed that, in the event of a conflict, network participants usually support the interests of a group as a network unit, in an event involving political economy it is otherwise: representatives of the political pole seek to acknowledge business authority, since it is especially beneficial for distorting the structure of network power levers. According to Hajer (2003 b), by agreeing with the business ideology being spread by media participants, public policy participants acquire the right

to coalesce not only with members of their group in supporting the same problem frames, but also with participants of the entire network, because the attention is not focused on their relations, but to a greater extent on the ideology content (idea of a problem). Therefore, while searching for analogies of a problem as an ideology network, participants dismantle a scheme of a formed network – media participants – public policy participants – and the power is acquired by the participants who construct most ideologically similar problem frames (Fischer c, 2003; Hajer, 1993: cit. Fischer, Forester) (see Fig. 1).

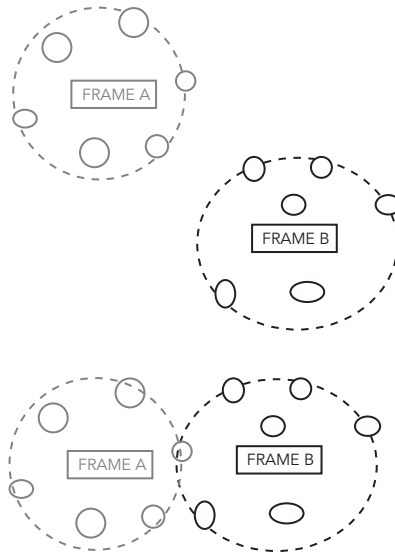


Figure 1. The interaction between network participants and framing change (adapted according to Hajer, 1993)

Therefore, political economy as a factor of a change in the participants' interaction also influences the comprehension of the features of a problem as whole and the distribution of power of the groups of network participants. In constructing the problem frames, the power (domination) of both groups of participants

may be eliminated, if the amount of problem frames of certain participants outweighs the amount of problem frames of other participants. As K. Carragee and W. Roefs (2004) state, in the event of the construction of a similar amount of problem frames, the power should be divided; however, according to the framing process logic, problem reframing is being performed. Then, due to the influence of the problem construction, the conflict is transferred to the level of the construction of news agendas and their provision to the public (audience), due to the influence of the problem construction.

Based on the main principles of the theory of political economy, an ideologically affected problem frame becomes an incentive for the interaction participants to compete for influence in the problem framing process. The result of this process is a modified definition of a problem frame within the group and among separate participants, and the localized (concentrated) power to construct a collective, but inequitable, problem frame in one group of participants.

## Conclusions

The conducted analysis of the interaction between the media and public policy participants in a problem discourse revealed that the interaction between actors is difficult to depict and depends on a multitude of variables: the environment in which it is being developed, interests of the participants in support of a public/business position, problem definition and comprehension, and ultimately, the choice and the treatment of a theoretical direction, method (in this case, framing). The interaction between the media and public policy participants, featuring dynamism, influences the roles of the participants as separate problem framers, as well as their change.

In conclusion, problem and problem discourse in the interaction between participants remains the main factor and a cause for change: A problem and its treatment directly express the participants' views of the issue in question, determine the priorities

of the participants' interaction (compete, act in concert), and become a premise for network construction. Problem framing and interaction between the media and public policy participants not only highlights the problem construction sequence and its particularities. It also expresses hidden interests and aspirations of participants that consistently change. It is beneficial to note that the article aims at revealing theoretical and operating models of interaction between the media and public policy participants in problem construction. The employment of additional variables may specify and detail the interaction by searching for new ways of depiction and points of contact. A further analysis of the interaction between the media and public policy participants may be transferred to the level of the construction of new agendas. It may be done in order to reveal the particularities, similarities, and/or differences of the provision of a general (collective) problem frame to the media and public policy agendas, simultaneously highlighting the stability and/or change of the participants' interaction.

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Different aspects in the field of communication studies are exposed in this book. Communication is studied as a process, as a model and an instrument for overcoming barriers, building satisfaction, mutual understanding, consensus and trust. The tradition of analysis of communication activities in the public sector is related with the linear understanding of communication (mainly, with information) processes. A modern approach to communication includes a dialogical approach and comfort for both online and face-to-face communication. This book aims to highlight the relevant participants of management and administration in the public sector by emphasizing the communicative aspect. The book is constructed on the meta-theoretical approach that communication is the basis for every activity and interaction on various levels: between individuals, groups, organizations and states. The communicative activities are understood as the key components of processes that occur in public governance and create the system of interactions among those participants.

The book is based on the concept of strategic communication and its increasing importance in the processes of new public governance. The strategic communication approach applied in the construction of the chapters and the entire frame of the book stresses the main aspects of effective communication that could be applied by the participants of public governance in order to reach mutual understanding and their goals.

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