

From Paperwork to Pixels: Workload and Digital Governance in Armenian Local Authorities

Bobghiashvili Giorgi

Caucasus University, Caucasus School of Governance, Tbilisi, Georgia

Abstract: This paper explores the intricate dynamics of increased workload and e-governance in the context of amalgamation reforms in Armenia. Anchored in the Dahl-and-Tufte dilemma, which explores the paradox of community size versus effectiveness and democratic representation, the paper investigates the practical implications of this theoretical construct in Armenia's context. It examines the shift in work distribution post-community amalgamation and scrutinizes digital governance tools' role in managing workload pressures. Building up on the rich literature on post-amalgamation developments (particularly, on Zheng, Sun, and De Witte (2023) and Galizzi, Rota, and Sicilia (2023)), the study meticulously examines how the distribution of work and responsibilities shifted as local communities amalgamated, providing insights into the efficiencies and challenges that emerged. Additionally, the paper scrutinises the role of digital governance tools in mitigating the workload pressures experienced by local administrators.

By investigating the synergy between amalgamation-induced increased workloads and the introduction of e-governance tools, the paper aims to shed light on the underlying tensions and potential solutions that emerge in local governance systems undergoing significant transformation. It is within this dynamic space that we uncover the intricate interplay between administrative efficiency and public service delivery, shedding light on the broader implications for democracy, accountability, and citizen engagement. Ultimately, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding decentralisation, local democracy, and e-governance, offering valuable insights into the evolving landscape of local governance in the era of consolidation and digitalisation.