

Institutional And Functional Foundations of Public Administration

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Abstract

Public administration plays a pivotal role in maintaining social order, directing national development, and ensuring effective governance through institutionalized structures and processes. In Uzbekistan, ongoing democratic reforms and the pursuit of a civil society model have brought increased attention to the institutional and functional foundations of public administration, yet its philosophical, ethical, and structural dimensions remain underexamined in practice. Despite reforms and theoretical discourse, there is limited integrated analysis of how political institutions and administrative functions interact to shape governance outcomes within the Uzbek context. This study aims to explore the institutional and functional foundations of public administration, emphasizing the role of state power, the structure of governing bodies, and the mechanisms that link state authority with civil society. The analysis reveals that effective governance depends on a well-defined structure of power distribution, ethical leadership, legal legitimacy, and cooperation between formal and informal institutions. Historical and philosophical perspectives, such as those from Plato and Duverger, illustrate how ethical governance and institutional models impact state-society dynamics. In Uzbekistan, challenges such as bureaucratic alienation and weak communication with the public hinder trust and efficiency. By combining classical political theory with modern administrative analysis, the study provides a comprehensive conceptual framework rooted in both tradition and current reform needs. The findings highlight the necessity of fostering public trust through transparency, functional clarity, and leadership ethics. This research supports policy efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks and promote people-centered governance in Uzbekistan.

Key words: State and Society, State Power, Administration, Social Governance, Governing Bodies, Political Institution, Authority, Institutionalized Power

Introduction

Democratic institutions of social governance serve to establish socio-political, legal, moral, and ethical relations among citizens and ensure that such relations are regulated fairly and in a people-oriented manner [1]. As a result, reforms aimed at establishing an enlightened civil society are being implemented consistently. Particular attention is paid to creating effective mechanisms for social cooperation between civil society institutions and state power and governance bodies.

It is known that the state and society, as living socio-historical realities, possess a specific philosophical ideology and conceptual strategy depending on the stage of their cultural development [2]. They are characterized by their goals, aims, content and essence of activity, and trends of progress and direction. Based on these attributes, states and societies differ from each other, are interpreted accordingly, and evaluated appropriately.

Today, we are moving toward a path of innovative development aimed at fundamentally renewing all areas of state and public life. This is no coincidence. In this rapidly developing era, who will succeed? The one who relies on new ideas, innovation, and creativity will succeed.

Any modern socio-political process, especially one as systemic as public administration, compels us to delve into its nature and essence. Many socio-political phenomena in society arise directly from the issue of governance. The Latin term “administration” means “service” and “management” and implies leadership over someone or something [3].

Governance is a universal and essential feature of the world around us. It is a necessity—without it, human activity cannot be directed toward specific goals or areas developed properly. Where there is no governance, disorder and chaos arise.

When examining public administration from the standpoint of its essence, questions arise such as: Who holds power in the state? Who is the subject of this power? Which class or social group does the state represent and protect? What are the state's main components and internal structures? What methods does it use to exercise power? Which state bodies implement governance, and how are they structured and authorized? These questions require clear answers [4].

Throughout the history of political and legal thought, concepts such as “state”, “society”, and “governance” have been approached differently depending on the prevailing socio-political context and criteria. In an organized society, the entity exercising state power defines the state's form of governance. These questions have intrigued humanity for centuries. For instance, in ancient Greek political-legal theory, Democritus stated: “In the state, public interest and justice are paramount. The state's interests supersede all else. Therefore, citizens must strive to improve state order and governance. The “noble” are not necessarily the

aristocrats or wealthy of the past but those who possess intellectual and moral virtues. Such people should govern. Laws must serve the welfare of the citizens. However, to achieve this, people must also make an effort, obey the law, and remain loyal to it”.

Literature Review

Analyzing the tremendous progress and significant achievements of our country, and the new ideas in state and social development, requires interpreting these democratic institutions and socio-political values as integral parts of our legal consciousness and culture [5]. This aligns with the main objective of building a just, humane, and democratic state with a free and prosperous life in Uzbekistan. The country is implementing modern governance methods aimed at concrete outcomes, particularly realizing the idea: “It is not the people who should serve state bodies, but the state bodies that must serve the people.” In this regard, the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov emphasized: “We are striving to build a civil society. This means that as our statehood develops, various governance functions must increasingly be transferred directly to the people, that is, through self-governing bodies”.

Plato, a major contributor to classical philosophy and political-legal thought, in his work *The Republic*, sought to uncover the roots of social inequality and contemplated the establishment of a just and ideal state [6]. He divided society into three classes: philosopher-rulers, warriors, and producers (farmers and artisans). According to Plato: “Philosopher-rulers govern, create theoretical frameworks, comprehend the world, and educate others. Warriors maintain order and defend the state, while producers perform physical labor, create material wealth, and own limited private property only when necessary”.

Materials and Methods

In our view, since the state remains the leading element of society, the attitude, honesty, and ethical integrity of the governing class significantly influence the prestige of the state and the sustainable development of society. State service is a unique form of social interaction, wherein state authority fulfills its function of organizing and managing social processes and human behavior [7].

The First President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, during an extraordinary session of the Surkhandarya Regional Council on June 1, 2004, stated:

“When does a leader earn the people’s trust and respect? When he is sincere, honest, open-hearted, intelligent, and just. A leader must be able to empathize with the struggles of those he governs” [8].

The great scholar Husayn Vaiz Kashifi also noted that: “Neither the state nor society can exist without politics and governance. Without them, essential affairs of the world cannot be managed, and the absence of laws concerning discipline and punishment leads to the disruption of state functions”. According to him, governance operates on two levels self-

governance and governance over others. He believed that without governance, mutual support in society disappears, leading to selfishness, conflict, destruction, and tyranny.

Results and Discussion

From these perspectives, it can be concluded that “governance” is not merely about exercising administrative power but is also a factor that influences people's consciousness, behavior, and activity through motivation [9]. In this sense, governance is creative, cooperative, and aimed at societal development and achieving national objectives [10]. Therefore, understanding public administration requires analyzing the mutual influence between interconnected components.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states: “The Republic of Uzbekistan determines its national-state and administrative-territorial structure, the system of state power and administrative bodies, and carries out domestic and foreign policy...”. Public administration may thus be regarded as a “subject of governance” (governance system), where the interaction between this subject and the governed social spheres must be understood before exerting influence. The state, through its apparatus, determines the mechanisms of influence and defines their legal forms, while society shapes the content of this interaction based on laws, interests, and needs, aligning them with the resources of the governing subject.

To form effective administrative functions, existing problems in the public administration system must be identified. The foremost issue, as President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized, lies in the “system of communication between state organizations and the people.” Factors creating negative public perceptions of state authorities and officials include: “alienation from the people”, “a significant gap between words and actions (hypocrisy)”, “corruption” [11].

To eliminate these factors, it is essential to clearly define the functions of public administration, enhance the role and initiative of government bodies in forming national and regional development programs, and treat these goals as a priority in the reform agenda. In France, the issue of implementing administrative reforms in public administration is reflected in unique characteristics. One early stage in the evolution of administrative public administration theory in France was the “theory of institutions”. Professor Maurice Duverger of the University of Paris expanded the scope of institutional theory, attempting to define its characteristics and direction [12].

He wrote: “From now on, not only legally defined institutions but also informal institutions and lower-level governance bodies are being studied” [13].

In the early 1970 s, Duverger introduced a new concept of institutions, influenced by political structuralism, which significantly differed from the traditional notion of institutions. According to him, “institutions are well-known models of human relationships [14]. Unlike spontaneous and unstable interactions, institutional models are structured and predictable”. Therefore, Duverger proposed an “institutional” approach to administrative public administration. Based on this theory, the “institutional concept of governance” emerged in France, replacing the legalistic view of the state as a juridical entity operating within constitutional legal norms [15].

Conclusion

The study of the institutional and functional foundations of public administration reveals that governance is not merely an administrative process but a dynamic and interactive system that influences social consciousness, collective behavior, and national progress. The analysis confirms that public administration in Uzbekistan is undergoing a phase of thoughtful modernization, aiming to strengthen democratic institutions and foster a citizen-centered model of governance. The concept of “institutionalized power” remains essential in regulating interactions between the state and society, while the philosophical and theoretical perspectives of thinkers such as Plato and Democritus remain relevant in defining just governance structures. The transition toward an innovative and people-oriented administrative model necessitates clear delineation of public administration functions, effective communication between state bodies and the public, and a concerted effort to eliminate alienation, hypocrisy, and corruption within the system. Drawing from national policy frameworks and international experiences—such as France’s institutional theory—it is evident that administrative efficiency is closely tied to the recognition and integration of both formal and informal institutional structures. Moreover, leadership rooted in empathy, honesty, and justice remains a cornerstone of legitimate governance. For Uzbekistan, reinforcing the values of responsibility, transparency, and participatory governance will be essential in sustaining political legitimacy and achieving national development objectives. Ultimately, public administration must be viewed as a collaborative mechanism that aligns state authority with the needs and aspirations of the people, ensuring stability, equity, and progress in all aspects of public life.

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