

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: DEMOCRATIC RELATIONSHIPS AND LEADERS

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**Abstract**

In the system of modern democratic processes, elections of supreme state authorities and local self-government bodies are of the utmost importance, which essentially determine the future of the state and the purposeful fulfillment of its mission, as leadership at the macro- and micro-levels is a determining factor of the effectiveness of governance. The fundamental task of leadership in the system of public administration consists in the selection of such leaders who possess the known qualities of not a formal but a real leader. In order to participate in democratic processes with knowledge of the facts, it is necessary to have basic civilizational and political maturity, to be able to understand the intricacies of democratic elections, to believe not in words, but in deeds, the path taken and the results of the activities of the candidates participating in the elections, to distinguish populism from real achievements, so that true leaders win. Complex issues of strategic development of the country, budgetary regulation of financial flows, ensuring macroeconomic stability and security of the state, etc. are solved in the state legislative and executive authorities. e. This means that, unlike in business, where the choice of an effective leader is determined by personal interests in obtaining high incomes, in the system of public administration there are multifaceted interests that are not of a personal, but of a state, public nature. Therefore, for the selection of democratic and transformational leaders as leaders and representatives in state authorities and local self-government, it is very important to establish legislatively certain criteria for evaluating such qualities of future leaders as the style of working with subordinates, initiative, the ability to implement innovations, the ability to make managerial decisions in various situations and taking into account the high needs of people.

**Keywords:** democracy, transformation, leadership, power, maturity.

**Introduction**

The transformations of the global economy, politics, science, and culture have occurred and continue to occur uninterruptedly as a result of the development of human civilization and scientific and technological progress. Based on these leading factors,

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the volume and diversification of the structure of needs and demand for various goods and services in the broadest sense are steadily increasing, which, in turn, stimulate new transformational processes.

The dynamism of transformations encompasses all aspects of human activity and determines the level of its effectiveness. The latter largely depends on the content and methodology of public administration, which includes the systems of state and local self-government, as well as the institutions of civil society (socio-political organizations and parties).

### **Statement of the Problem**

One of the historical manifestations of global transformations is the replacement of the monarchical form of state with the republican (democratic) form, where the supreme governing bodies and the leadership of local self-government bodies are elected through democratic constitutional mechanisms. This process began in the world at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Studies prove that the level of civilizational development and political maturity of a country's population are of important synergistic significance for the democratic election of government bodies. This includes a deep understanding of the necessity of statehood and of targeted, effective state functions to ensure adequate welfare, internal, and external security for the population.

At the same time, it is known that leadership at the macro and micro levels is the defining factor in management effectiveness. It is no secret that success is achieved by the country, or organization, that is managed by a leader possessing the known qualities of a genuine, not just a formal, leader. When considering the problems of global inequality, D. Acemoglu and J.A. Robinson note that "traditional economists ignored politics, but it is the understanding of how the political system works that is the key to explaining global economic inequality... We argue that the path to prosperity lies through solving basic political problems" (Acemoglu, Robinson 2016, 97–98). It is well-known that solving these problems is the mandate of elected supreme governing bodies. The question arises: in modern conditions, is it possible to elect leaders within the system of public administration who predominantly possess the qualities of genuine leaders?

Historical and logical analysis across countries indicates that there is no unambiguous answer to this question. This is especially true for newly created and relatively weak countries in terms of economic and scientific-technological development.

Let us consider this problem in more detail and present possible directions for its solution for scientific discussion.

### **Important Prerequisites for a Correct Democratic Choice in Turbulent Times**

As is known, the necessity of the state, as a universal legitimate organ of legal authority, was substantiated by European thinkers, proponents of the natural law theory [T. Hobbes (1588–1679), J. Locke (1632–1704), J.-J. Rousseau (1712–1798), P. Holbach (1723–1780), and others] by stating that “man in his nature is an evil being, in society there is a war of all against all, and to limit its manifestations, the state is necessary”<sup>1</sup>. / In the opinion of J.-J. Rousseau, “Insatiable ambition, the passion to increase the relative size of one’s fortune, on the one hand, and the opposition of interests, on the other, everywhere—a hidden desire to profit at the expense of others.” All these calamities are “the first effect of property and the inseparable consequence of nascent inequality”.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the aforementioned negative tendencies in human behavior are also characteristic of individual states. The passionate desire for a greater sphere of influence, more territory, and wealth is the driving force in the politics and practice of certain contemporary states. In place of hard military power, their arsenal includes methods of influence using the so-called “soft power” through various non-governmental organizations, which are generously financed by these countries. Such actions lead to turbulent times, especially for relatively weak, politically unstable countries.

It is generally known that the UN and specialized supranational organizations were created to regulate international conflict situations and solve problems in the areas of international trade, healthcare, protection of cultural heritage, etc. However, these structures did not become an obstacle to the color revolutions in some post-Soviet republics. Practice shows that such campaigns most often occur during general elections or in the post-election period.

According to Western thinkers, there are also problems in the sphere of domestic democratic processes, which are due to the fact that “what was once an active civil society is suffering a regression not so much because of technology as because of excessive state encroachments”.<sup>3</sup> “We the people,” Ferguson continues, “live in a complex institutional matrix which includes government, the market, the law, and civil society.” Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these institutions worked in concert, which accounted for the successes of Western countries. Today, the work of these institutions has failed, and to return to the fundamental principles of a truly free society, it is necessary to start acting as before.<sup>4</sup>

Historical and logical analysis allows us to conclude that the sustainable, progressive political and economic development of a country largely depends on the level of civilizational and political maturity of society. In modern conditions, this society forms the bodies of state power and local self-government through democratic choice,

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<sup>1</sup> Chirkin 2001: 23.

<sup>2</sup> Marchenko 2001 (Ed.): 67.

<sup>3</sup> Ferguson 2000: 160-161.

<sup>4</sup> Ferguson 2000: 160-161.

thereby determining the future of the state and the effectiveness of its mission and state functions.<sup>5</sup>

Representatives of many nations have made a tangible contribution to the development of world civilization, the results of which are utilized by the masses, thereby increasing the civilizational literacy of people.

Political science, as a part of civilization, is also developed by scholars. However, without at least rudimentary knowledge of political science and the significance of statehood, it is difficult to participate in elections for the supreme bodies of power. Therefore, it is essential to have basic political literacy and a minimal understanding of economic issues. Modern people successfully use the achievements of information technology, and to participate competently in democratic processes, they must delve into the nuances of democratic elections.

### **Effectiveness of Leadership in the System of Public Administration**

Many management methods and principles originated and were formed in the world of business, but in the early twentieth century, they gradually began to be introduced into the system of public administration. Specifically, this refers to strategic management and methods for choosing strategic programs, the system for controlling the execution of planned tasks, and the application of effective forms of employee motivation. (Former U.S. President W. Wilson believed that “the field of administration is the field of business” and that to ensure effectiveness in government activity, one must look for “models of administrative management in the private sector,” as leading a government perfectly aligns with managing an organization’s activities and considers efficiency its primary goal<sup>6</sup>).

Leadership problems were also considered a subject of scientific discussion, using organizations as examples. Experience shows that the scale of tasks or organizations is not fundamentally important for managerial activity; the main thing is to master the management methodology and possess managerial qualities. From this perspective, leadership methods are also applied in the system of public administration. However, there are still unresolved issues in this area, which lie in the sphere of selecting leaders.

In scientific literature, the concept of leadership is characterized as “the ability to influence individuals and groups to motivate them to work toward the achievement of goals”.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, power differs from leadership in that “power is the ability to influence people’s behavior”.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, an organization or country will be in a more advantageous position if the manager is simultaneously its leader.

According to scholarly research, the main traits characteristic of leaders are the following: 1. Proponents of the personal theory of leadership or the Great Man theory

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<sup>5</sup> Suvaryan 2023: 74-102.

<sup>6</sup> Denhart 2006: 63-71.

<sup>7</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 464.

<sup>8</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 464.

emphasize important personal qualities such as level of intelligence and knowledge, impressive appearance, honesty, common sense, initiative, social and economic education, and a high degree of self-confidence.<sup>9</sup> 2. Representatives of the behavioral approach to leadership believe that the effectiveness of leadership is determined not by the manager's personal qualities, but rather by their behavior toward subordinates. Based on this, D. McGregor identifies four leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, task-oriented, and people-oriented. The first is focused on Maslow's primary needs (physiological, security, and safety), while the second is focused on the secondary, higher-level needs (self-actualization, esteem, belonging).<sup>10</sup>

Likert, who researched leadership issues, examines two variations of the autocratic style: exploitative-authoritarian and benevolent-authoritarian. In his opinion, the democratic style can be specified as consultative-democratic and, in a more progressive form, as participative.<sup>11</sup>

3. Representatives of the situational approach to leadership attach crucial importance to situational factors for leadership effectiveness<sup>12</sup>. For example, Fiedler's Contingency Model includes three situational factors:

- Leader-Member Relations (the attractiveness of the leader's personality in the eyes of subordinates, their loyalty to the leader).
- Task Structure (the clarity of its formulation).
- Position Power (the amount of legitimate authority).

Overall, it is evident that leadership effectiveness in all management contexts depends on the leader's personal qualities, their behavior toward subordinates—which is determined by the leader's mindset and intelligence—as well as their ability to accurately orient themselves in various situations.

The scientific literature also describes transformational leaders and Level 5 leadership.

Transformational leaders<sup>13</sup> and charismatic leaders are distinguished by their ability to implement innovations and effect changes.

Level 5 Leadership progresses from a Capable Individual (Level I), a Contributing Team Member (Level II), a Competent Manager (Level III), an Effective Leader (Level IV), and finally to a Level 5 Leader, who is humble and professional, and who builds an organization capable of remaining truly great for a long period.

The fundamental task of leadership in the system of public administration is to select a manager who corresponds to the aforementioned qualities of a true, not just formal, leader. In the business sphere, this task is solved based on the interests of investors who seek high returns. The engagement of team members stimulates the

<sup>9</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 488.

<sup>10</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 491-495.

<sup>11</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 495.

<sup>12</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 501.

<sup>13</sup> Daft 2006: 596.

selection of an effective manager. For instance, the general meeting of an open joint-stock company elects a board of directors and an executive director who are focused on the prosperity of the organization—the growth of sales and profit.

In the sphere of public administration, there are multifaceted interests. The most important among them are strengthening statehood, the country's defense capability, developing the economy, science, and culture, and improving the well-being of the people. This means that the interests are state and public in nature, not personal. Consequently, there is an objective necessity to adequately regulate democratic processes through reasonable restrictive criteria, thereby facilitating the resolution of important public and state issues.

Now let us examine the main current laws of the Russian Federation (RF) and the Republic of Armenia (RA) from the perspective of ensuring the required criteria for heads of state and other elected officials as leaders, and of securing criteria for effective leadership.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation details the functions of the head of state, the President of the RF, the State Duma, the Federation Council, and local self-government bodies. Article 81.2 states that "A citizen of the Russian Federation who is not younger than 35 years of age and has permanently resided in the Russian Federation for at least 10 years may be elected President of the Russian Federation".<sup>14</sup> According to Article 97.1, "A citizen of the Russian Federation who has reached the age of 21 years and has the right to participate in elections may be elected a Deputy of the State Duma".<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, "Deputies of the State Duma shall perform their duties on a professional, full-time basis."

The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia also provides criteria for the election of the President of the Republic and deputies to the republican parliament. According to Article 124, "Anyone who has reached the age of 40, who has been a citizen only of the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 6 years, has permanently resided in the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 6 years, has the right to vote, and has a command of the Armenian language may be elected President of the Republic".<sup>16</sup> A Deputy of the National Assembly (Article 48.2) may be elected by anyone who has reached the age of 25, has been a citizen only of the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 4 years, has permanently resided in the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 4 years, has the right to vote, and has a command of the Armenian language. Article 148.1 of the Constitution of the RA affirms that a member of the government must meet the requirements set for members of parliament.

In the parliaments of modern states, complex issues of the country's strategic development, problems of budgetary regulation, ensuring macroeconomic stabilization, and overall, creating the legislative framework for all spheres of political, socio-

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<sup>14</sup> Constitution - Russia 2006: 21.

<sup>15</sup> Constitution - Russia 2006: 25.

<sup>16</sup> Constitution - Armenia 2019: 53.

economic life, and state security, are decided. Therefore, deputies of a professional, full-time parliament should be highly qualified specialists predominantly in the fields of physics/technology, law, economics, and education, with more than ten years of active work experience in state institutions and large private production and technology enterprises. These requirements are also most important for representatives and employees of the executive branch. In an era of rapid scientific and technological progress and artificial intelligence, a high educational level for officials at all levels of the state's legislative and executive power is an objective necessity. And successful work experience in the aforementioned organizations will allow for the assessment of leadership qualities such as working style with subordinates, initiative, and the ability to make managerial decisions in various situations and taking into account the high needs of subordinates. These managerial qualities are the main signs of a democratic and transformational leader. Therefore, the criterion of successful work experience in state and large private enterprises is an important condition for selecting potential leaders.

In some countries, democratic elections for government bodies are influenced by the so-called "deep state," which then has the opportunity to influence managerial decisions in its own interests, which differ from state interests. This violates the principles and goals of democracy, making it unlikely that hopes can be placed on effective leadership.

### **Conclusion**

Summarizing the above, it should be emphasized that the objective and correct selection of supreme power and local leaders requires:

- An appropriate civilizational and political science level among the population and, on that basis, the ability of people to distinguish populism from real achievements, and a potential leader from an ordinary official.
- Constitutional and legislative establishment of clear criteria for the election of future true (not formal) leaders.

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