



The Overview on The Modernization of Public Administration and Sustainable Development in The Armenia

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Summary

The article discusses one of the main issues of public administration studies, the modernization of public administration system impacted by various conditions. The **purpose of research** presents the status and the main objectives of decentralization process in the Republic of Armenia. To balance the public sector modernization with wider financial support, participation and service, the research shed light on the role of public administration reforms strategy and programs. The balance between public authorities, the impact of public reforms and other issues are central for the current research. Yet, small number of papers has been published to study abovementioned issues. To enhance the understanding on the topic and to respond to the complexity of issues, this article provides a wide range of literature and research sources, including analysis of official data, programs and actions.

The current research paper provides a general overview of the principles of public bodies, practical implications for enhancing the sustainable and responsive public administration system in the Republic of Armenia. We believe that the task of public administration modernization is not to try regulate everything but to balance and coordinate governance based on the principle of subsidiarity. **The main methods** of this research papers can be considered the comparative study of experiences, reforms have been carried out, evaluation of development based on qualitative and quantitative results. **The theoretical basis** of the research is the essence and concept of new public administration.

The conclusion is that the sustainability is complex and in constant development according to institutional perceptions and collaboration within the public administration system. It illustrates that the modernization process results in multiple factors such as bureaucratic stability, statehood, rapid spreading of democratic values in accordance with socio-economic reforms. Democratic vibrations of public administration system come from local self-government, civil society and other actors.

Keywords: public administration studies; modernization; development

Introduction

The research is devoted to the analysis of the necessary conditions for modernizing the public administration system. "Modernization vibrations" can be caught from deep understanding and implementation of public administration concepts. It turns out that these "vibrations" can activate the vitality of the public administration system through the necessary conditions, that is, state building, bureaucracy organization, stability, etc.

The understanding of the issue also highlighted that without meeting these and other conditions, it is not possible to guarantee the establishment of a modern public administration system. For this purpose, this research used the results of theoretical and empirical studies related to the topic, as well as comprehensively presented the analysis of expert assessments of the conditions for the modernization of the public administration system. Accordingly, management culture was considered as a systemic condition for the modernization of public administration. The ties and relations of public administration bodies was considered as an institutional condition, and the activity of dissemination and circulation of new ideas as a value condition. As a result of data analysis, it was concluded that the systemic, institutional and value conditions guaranteeing the establishment of modern public administration have synergy, that is, their total result exceeds the sum of individual results. Synergy provides long-term, while providing conditions separately provides short-term effects.

The Interpretation of Modernization of Public Administration System

In any social system administration begins with the comprehensive analysis on the conditions of activities and development process. Therefore, discussions about modernizing the public administration system in the context of new political, social, and economic conditions are of great interest in themselves. The realities emerging from public life prove that there is a symbiosis of conditions for the success of modernization.

Public order is established in the behavioral model of public institutions, but only from the point of view of understanding the short-term effects of institutions on the system. Meanwhile, in terms of ensuring the long-term consequences of the system reform, to form and implement the synergic system, it is necessary to ensure the synchronous work of the institutions. Without such work, it is not possible to guarantee the transition and establishment of the modern system of public administration. According to the founder-theoretician of the modern theory of public administration P. Drucker, the system and institutions in states with a successful or fast modernization process operate within the framework of an interconnected network [1]. Drucker states that in any organizational system the key is the condition of interconnected functioning and simultaneous modernization. As other authors rightly point out, the effective management of the process of modernization of the public administration system, as a resource-intensive, burdensome process, determines the degree of satisfaction of many conditions [2]. Although there is a certain division of opinions over the dichotomy and primacy of conditions, the study shows that the synergy is justified.

It is appropriate to start with the discussion of the role of public administration institutions. The latter was interpreted and analyzed in an interesting way within the framework of a modern concept known as "Concept of Resilience". The concept was developed within the framework of transitology, where the methods and forms of the institutions of the public administration system to withstand various shocks arising during the democratic transition were analyzed [3]. Accordingly, resilience refers to the institution of flexible response to transition shocks. On the way to a deep

understanding of the phenomenon, it was interesting to come across the definition given by international, multidisciplinary research experts from "Alliances for Resistance". The definition is the following: Resilience can be measured three criteria, which are: a) the ability to withstand unpredictable changes, to reform one's own means and structures, b) the ability to adapt to changes through self-organization and self-regulation, c) to encourage innovations [4].

In modern European academic and scientific analytical journals, the idea that modern institutions are not integrated into one system is more common today. In modern European academic and scientific analytical journals, the idea that modern institutions are not integrated into one system is more common today. It follows from this idea that qualitative changes in public administration are analyzed in particular context. Different institutions are considered as independent variables, and each of them has a unique form of some democracy as a dependent variable [5]. According to that, the institutions create primary conditions for establishing and developing democracy. At the same time, state and local self-government bodies, civil society, the mass media, elections and etc. simultaneously have separate effects on the system and democracy. After all, one has to start the process of modernization, and therefore, the problem is which ones are the starters. The research question is the following: how to analyze the modernization of the public administration system: due to reform and modernization of institutions or to a systemic approach? At first, we will try to find and formulate the answer to that question through the modern concepts of public administration. For example, the classical concept of studying the modernization of the public administration system requires at least knowledge of the structures and functions, awareness of general systematic trends. The modern concept demands the use of "soft power" and new tools to influence the modernization of the public administration system [6]. At the present stage, the minimum and maximum approaches are combined. The latter is documented by the analytical frameworks that analyze the modernization of the public administration system in the context of complex transformations [7]. That context is the following: Under the conditions of a democratic regime, the modernization model of public administration is carried out in accordance with the strategic course of the state, with the principles of legality and common sense, of which public institutions are the primary bearers. Within the framework of this study, the understanding of the conditions was more valuable, because without their satisfaction, it is not possible to carry out the modernization of the public administration system on a synergic basis.

Clarifying the perception of the previous thought, study shows that the condition is the necessary basis, the totality of possibilities, on which any phenomenon is anchored. By virtue, actions arise and determine the possibilities and difficulties of success. And so, "vibrations of modernization" of the public administration system are transmitted due to certain conditions. Based on the comprehensive study of the problem, three levels of conditions were conventionally distinguished: systemic, institutional and value-oriented. A more in-depth understanding of each level can help to understand the modernization of the public administration system.

The study of modern concepts of public administration shows that the first condition at the systemic level is the phenomenon called **management culture**. Management culture is a set of historically passed managerial experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes reflecting the effects of reality. It is noteworthy that the management culture permeates all levels of public administration, from national up to local [8]. From the international expertise perspective, the discourse on the management culture is currently unfolding in the context of the analysis of democratic regimes [9]. Democracy is meant to protect the public administration system from deformations. Professor Michael Bower of the Florence School of Transnational Management, for example, in his recently published scientific article, gave a definition that management culture valued a public official's democratic leadership, organizational skills, courtesy, and other qualities [10]. Other research circles consider the entire administration or bureaucracy rather than an individual public official. In a democratic management culture, in contrast to an authoritarian one, bureaucracy is characterized by a decentralized way of working, committed and meaningful work [11]. In addition, it should be noted that the state administration has legitimacy in both democratic and authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, in the case of the first, legitimacy has the potential of integration, and in the case of the second, it is inertial. It is no coincidence that in public administration systems with many internal diversities, for instance, differences from the form of administrative territorial organization to the organization of local life, do not inhibit the ability of the state administration to integrate them.

State building is considered as another important condition for the modernization of public administration at the systemic level in this research paper. Statehood is the "shield" with which the system of public administration institutions is protected. Since the 1950s, the index assessment of statehood has been of great interest in the world, for which data are collected on the basis of indicators obtained from institutions. States with strong statehood are characterized by efficient institutionalism, well-established system of judicial and law-enforcement bodies, professional administration, and developed infrastructures. For justification, we refer to the list of leading states with a high index of statehood as of 2023, represented by Western European countries [12]. Among the international community, the "Transformation Index of the Bertelsmann Foundation" enjoys great prestige, which analyzes and compares strategies aimed at strengthening state-building in a peaceful way. The **political, economic and management dimensions** of the index are the most interesting. **Political dimension** implies the democratic order of statehood, includes the right to participate, the rule of law, stability of institutions, as well as political and social integration. **Economic dimension** implies the component of market economy, such as economic indicators, market and competition regulation, currency and price stability, protection of private property. The social component is added to the latter, that is, the level of socio-economic development, social order, ecology and the quality of education. And the last **management dimension** assesses the extent to which decision makers are able to lead and contribute to the modernization process by analyzing resource efficiency, consensus building, international cooperation, etc. [13]. Summarizing the above, one conclusion can be drawn that effective public administration implies regulation of

all public spheres based on modern principles of public administration. It is extremely important to constantly monitor the conditions that can promote and guarantee the continuity and strengthening of the state building process. Any state must be prepared to take the necessary steps to address systemic problems or mitigate the negative effects of policies. It also means controlling the entire territory of the state and guaranteeing the viability of a stable, prosperous, democratic system.

As discussed above, although, the institutions are not able to qualitatively reform itself, this does not mean that the institutional level of modernization of the public administration system is passive. "Vibrations of modernization" of public administration system are received from individual institutions, because it is possible to define its modern role exclusively in the conditions of institutional thinking. Since the 80s of the XX century, the concepts of public administration have tried to clearly outline the regulatory connections of subsystems of public administration and their institutions. However, the goal was not fully achieved, because the subsystems are closely interconnected, and it is difficult to prioritize any component. Very often, the difficulties are related to funding methods, assigned tasks, etc. Perhaps, the state, as a core institution of the public administration system, continues to be in a dominant position [14]. The reason is that still the state is the supreme institution that creates public good, defines the powers of public administration bodies, controls the function of implementing responsible administration. And although there is a need for joint and mutually agreed actions in various spheres of public administration, the power of the institutions should be decentralized in strict compliance with the law. For instance, in many documents adopted by the structure called the Council of Europe, the principle that the exercise of public powers should be decentralized has been established [15]. Guided by the strategy of ensuring efficiency and economy, today the institutions of public administration subsystems have a requirement to operate within the scope of clearly defined powers and responsibilities. In that case, M. Batali rightly noted, the operation of public administration actors during modernization is not free from political influences [16]. Based that circumstance, it is important that, in their turn, the public administration actor' power be institutionally full and exclusive.

The last level of conditions for modernizing public administration, which we singled out, is the value level. Under this condition, the spread and circulation of new, up-to-date ideas is assumed. Many authors have argued that the success of spreading the theoretical and applied values of modernization was conditioned by the factors of the transitional economy and political system [17]. Nevertheless, the adoption of value is one of the most important conditions for crossing the difficult path. The modern values of public administration system can be analyzed in the comprehensive, credible and sustainable reform agenda proposed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the corresponding document resulting from it (2023). This value axis includes the following: effective coordination of management through the government in line with public policy; active consultation of all major external and internal stakeholders and the general public during policy development; political responsibility of bureaucracy for the activities of public administration bodies in

their respective policy areas; administrative implementation of procedures in accordance with the principles of legality, including the principles of legal discretion, legal certainty, equality, impartiality and proportionality [18]. Moreover, the research found out provident that if a complete and comprehensive system of the public sector is formed, it is possible to minimize the level of corruption in the country. Clearly defining the strategic goals by the government, universally spreading the rules of conduct and values, implementing accessible and reliable public complaint structures, and launching an effective system for managing and controlling risks in public institutions are also valued. In addition, modern public administration is designed to provide simplified ways of providing public multi-channel services (both online and offline), taking into account the convenience of service users, diverse needs of different groups of users, neutralizing barriers to public service access.

Thus, the analysis of the conditions for modernizing the public administration system shows that any democratic state, or at least a state moving along such a course, is called to ensure the establishment and implementation of sufficient conditions for civilizational development. Upgrading by meeting those conditions is more complicated than getting from point “a” to “b”. In states with a modern public administration system, a value system is rooted. That means the political-administrative elite embodies the state, bearing responsibility for the implementation of large economic programs and policies for the purpose of forming modernization values and ensuring the well-being of future generations. Consequently, high-quality elites are determined by their resources to create, extract and redistribute values [19]. It is very important to understand what contribution the elite makes in terms of meeting the conditions of modernization. As in order, the elites formed to expand the development opportunities of the state, according to the model of creating values, which gives them strategic importance. Since the politico-administrative elite plays a key role in the formulation and institutionalization of the strategic vision, it carries and creates values guaranteeing the conditions for the modernization of the public administration system [20].

Modernization Conditions for Public Administration in the Republic of Armenia

The reasons for the weak foundations of public administration in the Republic of Armenia (RA) and the limited possibilities of forming a modern system were discussed and analyzed on the basis of three main reasons. **First**, in contrast to Westernized countries, many post-communist or transitional countries do not have areas with some political autonomy. Moreover, sub-national regions cannot make their own decisions, so they are directly controlled by the national government. The **second** reason is the difference between public administration and the organized and responsible institutions that make up politics. In the developed system of public administration, state bodies, political parties, non-governmental organizations, and mass media are significantly different and functionally specific. In the transition system, many of them still lack a strong civil society, professional political and free media environment. Among the institutions, state bodies are relatively institutionalized and responsible. **Third**, interpreting the role of government within public administration is another interesting

aspect of reasoning. The effective role of government in the developed world is concerned with the regulation of the public sector and the coordinated application of laws, strategies and public policies. According to another approach to the role of government in transition countries, it operates on the principle of a "strong hand", using direct interventions in various sectors of public life and emphasizing the role of public officials and servants [21]. Even in the case of an in-depth analysis, the political trend of economic reforms in RA shows that the state has gone through multi-layered stages of systemic instability. Nevertheless, in order to enrich the analytical bases of public administration modernization in the RA, primary data collection and analysis was carried out.

The development of the strategy for public administration reforms started in 2019. After then, in 2022 the RA government's decree was adopted titled "On approving the strategy of public administration reforms, the road map and result framework for the years 2022-2024, and the list of persons providing control and coordination of the implementation of the strategy" [22]. Study of the document reveals that the strategic axis of the reforms is built around the paradigm of the "integrated" government (Whole-of-the-Government), with the aim of ensuring the coordinated, synergic, professional, technology-based, responsible operation of the system. The strategic vision defines seven characteristics of the future state: human-centered, fair, stable, responsible, dynamic, innovative, optimal. The strategic goal of the public administration reforms is the establishment of a state administration system that provides excellent service, with democratic practices, advanced technologically and meritocratic staff. A framework of actions has been outlined to achieve the goals of the strategy. For example, actions within the strategic planning include: **a)** implementation of an integrated system of strategic planning, **b)** introduction of the institutional and individual responsibility for policy results; full implementation of the regulatory impact assessment system in line with the best international practice, **c)** establishment of an institutional system guaranteeing effective development partnership with transparent, predictable and wide use of national systems, **d)** provision of complete legislative bases for data policy and establishment of an institutional management system, **e)** formation of a developed state administrative data system, **f)** provision of institutional and legal bases contributing to the full realization of the right to freedom of information, **g)** capacity building for effective policy development and coordination, **h)** the introduction of digital/electronic solutions, ensuring optimal and effective policy coordination processes.

Actions for the modernization of public services included the creation of the analytical bases necessary for the formation of the agenda, the provision of a complete legal framework for the policy of services provided by the state, the modernization of the processes of the provision of state and community services, making them citizen-centered and optimal, the introduction of law-enforcement tools and basic infrastructure, ensuring the best available technological provision of up-to-date services with solutions, public awareness of services and feedback mechanisms with citizens.

And finally, for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of the management system and institutional modernization, the actions

included the following: **a)** provision of methodological tools and legal regulations for institutional modernization of the state, **b)** review of government activity procedures, ensuring optimal allocation of resources and time to achieve set goals, **c)** functional and institutional review and reorganization of state system bodies, **d)** optimization of support functions of the state system, **e)** the initiation of reforms of the state control system, **f)** the review of participatory management structures and tools, ensuring an open and inclusive decision-making process, **g)** the formation of a portfolio for building the image of the state system, ensuring the presentation of the state with a unified image, **h)** the foundations and tools of resource-efficient and sustainable management policies provision.

The 2022-2024 roadmap of the abovementioned strategy reflects the totality of actions and programs to achieve the goals of all strategic pillars, as well as reform administration. According to the document, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the reforms is planned to be carried out with three indicators: strategic, short-term result or intermediate indicators, which are the qualitative measurement of actions carried out in line with goals. In addition, analyzing the table of risks for the implementation of the strategy, it was highlighted that in the columns of risks, for instance, insufficient commitment to the implementation of reforms at a high level, capacities in the responsible public administration bodies arises and it connected often with the economic, geopolitical and other factors.

Conclusions

Thus, the most fundamental conditions for modernizing the public administration system are state building or strengthening of statehood, institutionalism, circulation and dissemination of values. Recognizing the superiority of these conditions, state adopts the success of the process of implementing the modernization of public administration based on the principle of synergy. The analyzes on this issue led to the idea that in the current rapidly changing period, modernization should be determined by the degree of satisfaction of these conditions. Trying to localize the ideas about the conditions of modernization of public administration in the RA, it became clear that they are conceptually understandable. The research data prove that in order to modernize the public administration system in the RA, targets were set, institutional reforms were developed, etc. Nevertheless, the combination of the necessary conditions, the existing realities and the assessed risks proves that the resources for the modernization of the public administration system based on the principle of synergy are not enough. The approach of reforming individual institutes, which, as the study showed, prevails in the agenda of modernization of public administration in the RA, can only provide short-term effects for the system. Meanwhile, we believe that ensuring the supremacy of the conditions formulated as a result of this study can be a continuous guarantee of a modern public administration system for the RA.

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