
CONFERENCE ARTICLE**Historical Development and Modern Transformation Of The Civil Service In Uzbekistan****Sarimsakov Begzod Xolmaxammadovich**

Chief Inspector of the Namangan Regional Branch of the Agency for Management Efficiency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article analyzes the historical formation and institutional development of the civil service in Uzbekistan, including the experience of public administration during the Soviet period, the processes of state-building following independence, and the legal and conceptual foundations of the modern civil service system. The study employs historical-institutional and comparative analysis methods to examine the evolution of such principles as professionalization, meritocracy, transparency, citizen orientation, and effectiveness in public service. The theoretical framework draws on Max Weber's concept of rational-legal bureaucracy, Christopher Hood's New Public Management approach, and Robert and Janet Denhardt's New Public Service paradigm. The modern stage of civil service development in Uzbekistan is examined on the basis of Presidential Decree No. PF-5843 of 2019, Law No. O'RQ-788 of 2022, and Presidential Decrees No. PF-95 and No. PF-243 of 2025. The study concludes that, from a historical perspective, the civil service in Uzbekistan can be characterized as a process of transition from various forms of political-administrative governance toward a professional, rule-based, transparent, and performance-oriented civil service model.

Keywords: Civil service, public administration, bureaucracy, professional civil service, meritocracy, civil service reform, New Public Management, New Public Service, digital governance, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

Civil service is one of the key institutional mechanisms for ensuring the professional capacity of the public administration system. Its scope is not limited merely to employment in government bodies; it also encompasses such functions as ensuring the professional exercise of the powers of public authorities, implementing public policy, and upholding legality and impartiality in relations with citizens. Under the current legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, civil service is legally defined as a distinct type of public service.

The study of the historical development of the civil service is essential for understanding its contemporary institutional characteristics. Modern civil service systems are shaped simultaneously by historical experience, legal institutions, administrative culture, and contemporary theories of public administration. From this perspective, the development of Uzbekistan's civil service should be examined through the interrelationship between the Soviet-era administrative system, post-independence state-building, and the institutional reforms implemented since 2019.

From a methodological standpoint, it would be inaccurate to equate the historical experience of public administration in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan with the modern civil service. The administrative institutions of the emirates, khanates, colonial period, and Soviet era represent different forms of state authority and administration and cannot be fully equated with the institution of a professional civil service in the contemporary sense. Therefore, when examining historical development, it is important to distinguish between the concepts of "historical experience of public administration" and "modern civil service."

During the Soviet period, public administration institutions in Uzbekistan were reorganized as an integral part of the Union-wide political and administrative system. The research of Adeeb Khalid demonstrates that the establishment of Soviet rule in Central Asia unfolded through complex interactions among local

political and intellectual forces, the Bolsheviks, and the central authorities in Moscow. Thus, explaining this period solely through the simplified formula that "Moscow made all the decisions" is not sufficient from a scholarly perspective.

Soviet governance was administratively centralized and hierarchical. However, its personnel system should not be equated with a modern merit-based civil service, as political loyalty, party control, and conformity with central policies were important institutional factors. At the same time, this period witnessed the development of the state apparatus, administrative governance, professional training, and institutional management practices. These experiences are important for understanding the historical context of the institutions that emerged in subsequent periods.

Thus, from a scholarly perspective, it is more accurate to regard the Soviet period not as the direct foundational model of Uzbekistan's civil service, but rather as a historical-administrative stage that influenced the subsequent development of public administration institutions.

The achievement of state independence in 1991 necessitated the adaptation of state authority and public administration institutions to the new political and legal conditions of national statehood. During this period, the powers of state bodies, the structure of public administration, the civil service, and the legal foundations of administrative and legal relations were gradually developed and improved. In his work Strategy of the New Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev also places particular emphasis on modernizing public administration, prioritizing the interests of citizens, and developing a professional public administration system.

The institutional systematization of the civil service marked a significant turning point with Presidential Decree No. PF-5843, dated October 3, 2019. The decree was aimed at fundamentally improving the personnel policy and civil service system in the Republic of Uzbekistan and laid the foundation for the development of modern mechanisms for the recruitment and

selection of civil servants, their professional development, and the organization of civil service.

A key feature of this stage was the distinction of civil service from general administrative activity, the strengthening of a personnel policy based on professional competencies, and the introduction of open competitive recruitment mechanisms. Therefore, the period following 2019 can be regarded as a stage in the legal and institutional formation of the civil service as a distinct institution.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. O'RQ-788, "On the Civil Service," adopted on August 8, 2022, systematically established the legal status of the civil service. The law consists of 10 chapters and 64 articles and entered into force on November 10, 2022. It regulates the concept and scope of the civil service, its principles, the rights and obligations of civil servants, and matters related to civil service employment.

The law legally establishes such principles of the civil service as the unity and stability of the civil service system, legality, fairness, service to the people, protection of citizens' rights and legitimate interests, openness and transparency, professionalism, and competence. In this regard, the direct characterization of "meritocracy" as a separate principle in the initial version of the article requires caution. Although a merit-based approach is reflected in recruitment and professional development mechanisms, it should not be equated with the principles explicitly set forth in the text of the law.

Along with establishing the civil service as a distinct legal institution, the law links the professional activities of civil servants to legality, impartiality, and professional competence. Therefore, the principal criterion of modern civil service is not merely holding a public position, but rather contributing to the professional and lawful exercise of the powers of a public authority.

Max Weber's concept of rational-legal bureaucracy occupies a particularly important place in the scholarly interpretation of civil service. In his work *Economy and Society*, Weber analyzes bureaucratic administration in connection with authority based on rules and laws, hierarchical structures, the functional division of positions, and professional administration.

However, Weber's model should not be understood as a ready-made or immutable model of modern public administration, but rather as an ideal-type theoretical construct for analyzing administrative systems.

From the late twentieth century onward, the New Public Management (NPM) approach, which emphasizes efficiency and performance, became increasingly influential in public administration theory. Christopher Hood associated the doctrinal content of this approach with the application of management techniques to the public sector, a stronger focus on performance, managerial control, and the efficiency of service delivery. However, NPM should not be regarded as a universal model capable of resolving all challenges of public administration; its limitations and criticisms have also been extensively discussed in the scholarly literature. In response to this, Robert B. Denhardt and Janet V. Denhardt, in their *New Public Service* concept, define the role of public servants not as managing citizens, but as serving them, identifying the public interest, and supporting democratic participation. This approach can serve as a useful conceptual framework for theoretically explaining the principles of "serving citizens" and openness in Uzbekistan's civil service.

John Rawls's theory of justice, in turn, provides a normative and philosophical foundation for evaluating public institutions from the perspectives of equal citizenship, fair equality of opportunity, and basic liberties. However, it would be inappropriate to interpret Rawls's theory directly as a model of the civil service; rather, it is primarily concerned with establishing normative criteria for just institutions. Modern public administration is increasingly associated with digital technologies, electronic

public services, data-driven decision-making, and institutional performance. However, from a scholarly perspective, limiting "digital governance" merely to the availability of electronic services represents a narrow approach. Digitalization should instead be considered in conjunction with the reorganization of administrative processes, data exchange, monitoring, transparency, and improvements in the quality of service delivery.

In Uzbekistan, Presidential Decree No. PF-95, dated June 19, 2025, marked the beginning of a new stage aimed at organizing the civil service based on new approaches and developing a professional and performance-oriented civil service corps. The decree introduced mechanisms related to recruitment into the civil service, professional development, the personnel reserve, key performance indicators (KPIs), and digital governance instruments. Presidential Decree No. PF-243, dated December 6, 2025, is aimed at improving management efficiency in the civil service, introducing a results-based management model, and enhancing the human resources management system. At this stage, the institutional framework of the Agency for Management Efficiency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established on the basis of the Agency for the Development of Public Service. The Agency's current responsibilities are associated with results-based management, target performance indicators, the development of human resource capacity, and the application of modern approaches to competitive recruitment for positions within the civil service. The findings of the analysis make it possible to divide the development of the civil service in Uzbekistan into three major stages. The first stage is the political-administrative governance experience of the Soviet period; the second is the formation of national public administration and legal institutions following independence; and the third is the strengthening of the civil service, beginning in 2019, as a distinct professional institution in legal and institutional terms. This periodization should not be regarded as a rigid or strictly demarcated historical scheme, but rather as a scholarly model for analyzing the institutional evolution of the civil service.

Several arguments in the initial version of the article were reconsidered from the standpoint of scholarly precision. In particular, instead of the categorical assertion that "an independent civil service institution did not emerge at all during the Soviet period," the analysis now recognizes the influence of the political-administrative system on the state apparatus and personnel institutions. Likewise, the generalization that "all major decisions were made by Moscow" was moderated to account for the complex relations between central and republican institutions. The principles established by Law No. O'RQ-788 were also distinguished from the theoretical concept of "meritocracy" used in the article. These revisions improve the article's consistency with its normative and theoretical sources.

Furthermore, it is appropriate to view the civil service not merely as a bureaucratic apparatus, but as an institutional system in which legality, professional competence, citizen-oriented service, openness, performance, and digital transformation are interconnected. In this context, the Weberian model helps explain the institutional and rational foundations of administration, NPM emphasizes performance and efficiency, while the New Public Service approach highlights citizen orientation. In Uzbekistan, elements of these approaches are being adapted to the country's national legal and administrative context.

Conclusion

The historical development of the civil service in Uzbekistan is an integral process closely linked to the political, legal, and social transformation of public administration institutions. Although the Soviet period contributed to the development of the state apparatus and administrative practices, it would be inaccurate to interpret the modern civil service as a direct continuation of that model. Following independence, the legal foundations of national public administration institutions were gradually established.

Presidential Decree No. PF-5843 of 2019, Law No. O'RQ-788 of 2022, and Presidential Decrees No. PF-95 and PF-243 of 2025 constituted important stages in the development of a professional, transparent, performance-oriented civil service model aligned with contemporary requirements of public administration.

From a scholarly perspective, the further development of Uzbekistan's civil service depends on maintaining a balance among three key dimensions: first, legality and institutional stability; second, professional competence and merit-based recruitment; and third, citizen orientation and performance. In this regard, the modern civil service is not merely a human resource management system, but an important institutional mechanism for strengthening trust between the state and society.

References

1. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. Yangi O'zbekiston strategiyasi. – Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2021. – 464 b.
2. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. Yangi O'zbekiston taraqqiyot strategiyasi. – Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2022. – 416 b.
3. II. Xorijiy olimlar asarlari
4. Khalid A. Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR. – Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015. – 444 p.
5. Khalid A. Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present. – Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021.
6. Weber M. Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology. Ed. G. Roth, C. Wittich. – Berkeley: University of California Press.
7. Rawls J. A Theory of Justice. – Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971. – 624 p.
8. III. Xorijiy ilmiy maqolalar
9. Hood C. A Public Management for All Seasons? // Public Administration. – 1991. – Vol. 69, No. 1. – P. 3–19. – DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x.
10. Denhardt R.B., Denhardt J.V. The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering // Public Administration Review. – 2000. – Vol. 60, No. 6. – P. 549–559. – DOI: 10.1111/0033-3352.00117.
11. IV. Mahalliy olimlar va o'quv adabiyotlari
12. Xo'jiev E.T., Ismailova G.S., Raximova M.A. Davlat xizmati: o'quv qo'llanma. – Toshkent: Baktria press, 2015.
13. V. Normativ-huquqiy hujjatlar
14. O'zbekiston Respublikasining "Davlat fuqarolik xizmati to'g'risida"gi Qonuni. O'RQ-788-son, 2022-yil 8-avgust.
15. O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2019-yil 3-oktabrdagi PF-5843-son "O'zbekiston Respublikasida kadrlar siyosati va davlat fuqarolik xizmati tizimini tubdan takomillashtirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida"gi Farmoni.
16. O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2025-yil 19-iyundagi PF-95-son "Davlat fuqarolik xizmatini yangi yondashuvlar asosida tashkil etish hamda professional va natijadorlikka yo'naltirilgan davlat xizmatchilari korpusini shakllantirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida"gi Farmoni.
17. O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2025-yil 6-dekabrda PF-243-son "Davlat xizmatida boshqaruv samaradorligini yanada oshirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida"gi Farmoni.
18. O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2022-yil 28-yanvardagi PF-60-son "2022–2026-yillarga mo'ljallangan

Yangi O'zbekistonning Taraqqiyot strategiyasi to'g'risida"gi Farmoni.